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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

EASTERN AFFAIRS

PART 22.

JAN-JUNE 1928.

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

EASTERN AFFAIRS

PART XXII

JANUARY TO JUNE 1928

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Eastern Affairs.

PART XXII.

CHAPTER I.—ARABIA.

[E 5584/119/91]

No. 1.

[This document should have appeared in the previous volume.]

Acting Consul Jakins to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)

(No. 132.)

HIS Majesty's acting agent and consul at Jeddah presents his compliments to His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit copy of a despatch to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mecca, of to-day's date, respecting the Haramain wakfs.

Jeddah, December 4, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Acting Consul Jakins to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mecca.

(After compliments.)

Your Excellency,

Jeddah, December 4, 1927.

I AM directed by His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to refer to the question of Haramain wakfs, which, as your Excellency is aware, was raised during the conversations between His Majesty the King and Sir Gilbert Clayton, and to inform your Excellency that His Britannic Majesty's Government have now reconsidered this question in the light of the explanations given by His Majesty to Sir Gilbert Clayton and, of the three specific requests put forward by him, which, as your Excellency is aware, were for—

- Information as to what Awkaf-el-Haramain existed in India.
- Advice as to the proper steps to take with a view to preferring and establishing such claims as he might wish to make.
- The normal measure of guidance and assistance to any delegation which he might decide to send to India, or elsewhere, for the purpose of making enquiries and preferring claims.

I am accordingly to request that your Excellency will be so good as to inform His Majesty that His Britannic Majesty's Government regret that, since it is their invariable principle never to interfere in religious matters or in the decisions of religious or civil courts, they cannot give him any promise of future assistance in the matter of Haramain wakfs. Subject to this reservation, however, His Majesty may rest assured that His Britannic Majesty's Government will in this matter, as in others, always be ready to consider sympathetically any request which he may make for assistance or advice.

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As regards His Majesty's three specific requests, His Britannic Majesty's Government regret that it is impossible for them to undertake themselves the collection of information as to what Haramain wakfs exist in territories under their control, since such action would certainly be interpreted by Moslem opinion in some of those territories as Government intervention on one side in a dispute which *ex hypothesi* is *sub judice*; and the same difficulty arises to some extent as regards the two other requests formulated by His Majesty. So far as India is concerned, the law does not recognise religious courts, but the civil courts are open to all alike, and His Majesty can rest assured that if he decides to resort to litigation through his legal representatives in India, no obstacle will be placed in his way.

(Respects.)

H. G. JAKINS.

[E 164/1/91]

No. 2.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 10.)

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Jeddah, January 10, 1928.

IN a letter dated 23rd December, addressed to me from Riyadh, Ibn Saud says that relations between Iraq and Nejd have become very critical, and that trouble has also occurred between certain of his subjects in the Persian Gulf and British officials. He is doing everything in his power to avoid any incident which might prejudice his relations with Great Britain, and is in daily correspondence with His Majesty's High Commissioner at Bagdad, but without result. In these circumstances he appeals to His Majesty's Government to assist him in finding a way out of his difficulties.

Though the letter is vague, Dr. Damluji informs me that to Ibn Saud's mind the only way of achieving a settlement is for His Majesty's Government to name a delegate to examine the question at issue. This delegate might subsequently attend a conference of representatives of Nejd, Iraq and Koweit.

I informed Dr. Damluji that I would report His Majesty's opinion by telegraph. It seemed to me, however, that it would be more satisfactory if the King agreed to have a private conference with a representative of the High Commissioner.

[E 164/1/91]

No. 3.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah).

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, January 13, 1928.

I APPROVE your language in your telegram No. 1 of 10th January: Nejd-Iraq relations.

You should reply in the following sense to Ibn Saud:—

"His Majesty's Government greatly appreciate His Majesty's confidence in them and are most anxious to assist in every way in their power to find a solution of the present difficulties between Nejd and Iraq. For this purpose they hope that His Majesty may find it possible at an early date to accept the invitation which they sent him on 2nd January to meet Colonel Haworth, the Resident in the Persian Gulf, for a discussion of the regrettable misunderstanding which has arisen in regard to the treaty. They are unable to understand on what grounds His Majesty and the Nejd tribes could regard the construction of the Busaiyah fort as an infraction of the Uqair Protocol; the latter speaks of 'Ala Atrah-al-Hudud' (near the frontier), whereas Busaiyah is no less than 50 miles from the neutral zone. It is of the first importance that this misunderstanding should be cleared up. His Majesty's Government are confident that this object will be fully attained at a meeting between His Majesty and Colonel Haworth, but should any further discussion appear necessary at a later stage they will be quite prepared to consider other arrangements for a meeting between representatives of themselves and His Majesty.

"Meanwhile they hope that His Majesty will realise their own difficulties. They have a very definite responsibility in respect of Iraq, and for this purpose the High Commissioner at Bagdad is their representative. This responsibility

applies more particularly to the maintenance of order and defence. Innocent Iraqis have been murdered and robbed by Nejd tribes. Just as His Majesty must accept responsibility for the actions of the Nejd, so His Majesty's Government must observe their responsibilities for the defence of the Iraqis. It is in these circumstances that they have, as His Majesty has already been notified, been compelled to authorise their air force in Iraq to punish the raiders and, if necessary, to pursue them across the border. His Majesty will realise that these punitive measures are justified and inevitable, but that they are in the nature of police measures against criminals and are in no way military measures against Nejd.

"His Majesty's Government do not understand reference to trouble between British officials and Nejd subjects in Persian Gulf, but this would seem to be a matter which could readily be cleared up in discussion with Colonel Haworth."

[E 256/1/91]

No. 4.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 16, 1928.)

(No. 137.)

Sir,

Jeddah, December 30, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of an article which appeared in the "Um-el-Qura" of the 16th instant.* It is, I understand, from the pen of Sheikh Yussuf Yassin, the Director of Publicity, and as such must be regarded as partially, if not wholly, inspired.

2. The writer, after protesting the peaceful intentions of the Government and people of the Hejaz and Nejd, inveighs against the malicious tone of the Iraq press in matters concerning this country. Iraq papers are accused of making capital out of the discontent of certain border tribes with the Ibn Saud régime. This, it is pointed out, is grossly unfair, as such discontent as exists is the result of the restraint exercised by Ibn Saud in his determination to keep to the letter of his agreements.

3. After mentioning Iraq raids into Nejd territory and making a point of the conciliatory spirit shown by Nejd, the writer turns to the question of the present incidents on the frontier. He asserts that the building of the post at Busaiyah was a definite breach of the agreement between the two Governments. The Bedouins regarded it as such and insisted with Ibn Saud that they should be allowed to demolish the post. The King refused to countenance any such action, but the distance of his capital from the seat of the trouble was so great that the task of restraining the frontier tribes was most difficult. The King was endeavouring by all means to reach a peaceful solution of the question. The authorities in Iraq are invited to co-operate in removing from the minds of the people their unfounded suspicions of any evil intentions on the part of Nejd, and in ensuring peaceful and friendly relations between these neighbours, united as they are by bonds of race and language.

4. I have elicited from Dr. Damluji, in the course of two interviews which I have recently had with him, an expression of his views. He is genuinely distressed at the occurrence of the incidents and slightly resentful of the tone of the comments appearing in the English press. He does not himself insist very strongly that the building of the post was a definite breach of agreement, but affirms that the tribes had considered it as such; he feels that the action of Iraq was ill-advised, and that courtesy and policy demanded that Ibn Saud should have previous knowledge of Iraq's intention. No one, he said, could seriously suspect Ibn Saud of having tacitly permitted the raids to take place, much less of having instigated them. I replied that I had seen no hint in the press that Ibn Saud either approved or instigated the raids. It was only natural that the King should be criticised, seeing that the tribes responsible owed allegiance to him; the predominant note seemed to me to be one rather of disappointment that Ibn Saud, who had gained a well-earned reputation as the restorer of peace and security, had been unable to restrain these turbulent elements.

5. Dr. Damluji reverted to his argument that if the authorities in Iraq had thought fit to inform the King of their intention to establish the posts he would have been able to allay the suspicions of the tribes, whereas he only received information

* Not printed.

of the *fait accompli*. Opinion among the tribes was then already incensed; he was, moreover, far from the seat of trouble.

6. I told Dr. Damluji that had the High Commissioner in Iraq had any idea that the establishment of the post could give rise to any suspicion he would, I felt sure, have made previous mention of it. The post was, however, so far from the frontier, as demonstrated by the map which I handed to him (Map No. 38 enclosed in your despatch No. 147 of the 7th instant) that its establishment could not possibly be interpreted as a breach of the agreement between Nejd and Iraq.

7. Copies of this despatch are being sent to Iraq, Egypt and Palestine.

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

[E 384/80/91]

No. 5.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 39.)

Sir,

Cairo, January 14, 1928.

WITH reference to correspondence ending with your despatch No. 1105 of the 6th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a letter addressed to me by Ibn Saud and handed to me by Sheikh Hafez Wahba, as reported in the second paragraph of my private telegram of the 9th instant.

2. The second sentence of the King's letter does not convey exactly what Sheikh Hafez Wahba was told on the occasion of his former visit just before my return to Egypt in November last. As reported in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of my despatch No. 682 of the 16th November last, nothing more was conveyed to Sheikh Hafez Wahba than an expression of doubt as to the extent of his authority. It was in view of this dubiousness, expressed by the member of my staff in question, that Sheikh Hafez Wahba said he would obtain written authority from the King to speak in His Majesty's name. The phraseology used in the second sentence of Ibn Saud's letter can be regarded as an oriental amplification of what was really said to his adviser.

3. Three questions form the subject of Ibn Saud's long letter, namely:—

- (1.) Italy's new position in Arabia, with special reference to the Yemen and Asir.
- (2.) The position of the Shereefian rulers of Iraq and Transjordan—a position full, according to Ibn Saud, of menace for the future.
- (3.) The position of the Bolsheviks in Arabia and their offensive against British trade interests.

4. In conversation with me, Sheikh Hafez Wahba amplified the written statements of Ibn Saud. I will briefly summarise his remarks on the three points mentioned above.

5. Sheikh Hafez Wahba began by saying that he wished to connect point (1) with point (3). Italy was arming the Imam Yahia and encouraging him against Asir. If a conflict were to result, the Imam would be able to count on Italian assistance in armament, while Ibn Saud might be left without any help from us. The latter's position would be extremely unpleasant. Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks were trying to penetrate economically both the Hejaz and the Yemen. Obviously this economic penetration would merely be a cover for political action directed against England. As regards the Hejaz, the drastic action taken, by Ibn Saud's orders, against the Russian steamship "Tomp" (see despatch No. 125 of the 22nd November last from the acting British agent and consul at Jeddah to you) was sufficient evidence of the King's present attitude, which was advantageous to Great Britain. It was not at all certain that the Imam Yahia would take up such a resolute attitude against the Bolsheviks, whose help he might regard as a useful supplement to that of Italy. Moreover, there were around Ibn Saud many Syrian exiles, whose attitude was governed less by the interests of the Hejaz than by their anxiety to evict the French from Syria. These extremists were prepared to accept Bolshevik help to further the cause of Syrian nationalism. In this connexion, the recent visit of one of their ilk, the Emir Shekib Arslan, to Moscow was significant. The influence of these Syrian advisers would be exercised in a pro-Bolshevik sense. Ibn Saud had no desire other than to maintain and strengthen his friendly relations

with England. But, if he were left alone, pressed by an enemy enjoying foreign support, harassed on other frontiers by unfriendly Shereefian rulers, he might well become troubled and accept assistance wherever he could find it. If he could rely on our support, he would not hesitate to continue his energetic resistance to Bolshevik penetration.

6. With regard to point (2), Sheikh Hafez Wahba added little to the King's written statements, though he suggested that the British officials in Iraq and Transjordan could not but be influenced by the Shereefian rulers, whose hostility to Ibn Saud was well-known. I was careful to turn the conversation from this issue as quickly as possible.

7. With regard to the points (1) and (3), I replied that I could only communicate his observations to London. I added that I had always entertained feelings of friendship for Ibn Saud, whose long and loyal dealings with us had in the past constituted an unchanging factor in a country where almost everything else had been in a state of change.

8. Sheikh Hafez Wahba also expressed the desire that the British Government would delegate a competent official, who was neither from Iraq nor the Persian Gulf, to discuss these questions with Ibn Saud with a view to finding satisfactory solutions. He mentioned Sir Gilbert Clayton as a *persona grata* to Ibn Saud.

9. It is not for me to enter into the thorny question of the relations between Ibn Saud and the Shereefian rulers of our mandatory territories. I think, however, that his anxieties on this score are real. He feels that Shereefian influence in Iraq and Transjordan must always be exercised to his detriment, both by pressure on British officials in those countries and by subterranean intrigue among border tribes. I think that it is only fair to take this anxiety of his into account when appreciating his general appeal for our goodwill in his many difficulties.

10. The other two points, however, are of much closer concern to Egypt as affecting our position on the Red Sea littoral. I venture to express the opinion that we cannot afford to leave Ibn Saud without guidance and help in questions of such grave interest to us as those of Bolshevik penetration into Western Arabia and of the Yemen-Asir conflict, complicated by Italian support of Imam Yahia.

11. I need hardly insist on the obvious danger to us of successful Bolshevik propaganda in a country like the Hejaz, which is the annual meeting place of so many Eastern races, either subjects or neighbours of ours. Ibn Saud's unconventional action in the matter of the Russian steamship "Tomp" shows that his present attitude is frankly anti-Bolshevik. He has no doubt adopted this attitude more in his own interests than, as he suggests, in ours. Equally obvious is his almost naïve attempt to invoke our assistance in South-West Arabia, as an equivalent for an anti-Bolshevik attitude which he has adopted on his own initiative and for his own ends. Yet these considerations should not lead us to disregard the possibility that, if Ibn Saud finds that he can get no support from us, he might well, under the influence of Syrian extremists, modify his present policy towards the Bolsheviks, with possible results highly detrimental to our interests in Arabia and, by natural extension, in the Sudan and Egypt.

12. As far as my horizon extends, South-West Arabia would seem to be the field in which we should endeavour more particularly to help Ibn Saud, and thus encourage him to stay within our orbit. Moreover, our interests in those parts seem to coincide with those of Ibn Saud.

13. I fear that it would be difficult to satisfy Ibn Saud with arguments based on the second paragraph of your despatch No. 1105 of the 6th ultimo. If Italy is arming the Imam and supports his claim to the whole of Asir, the danger to Ibn Saud would appear to be very real. It is perhaps unlikely that Italy would precipitate a conflict between Yemen and Nejd, though her object in doing so would seem to be fairly clear, namely, the extension of her ally's dominion over Asir. But this object would no doubt be more conveniently approached by indirect ways. The Idrisi's internal position appears to be rather unstable, and the reports of intrigues of pro-Italian and pro-Imam Yahia elements in Asir are too continuous to be disregarded. A report has even reached me to the effect that the Idrisi himself has been in touch with an Italian agent. If all this unrest were to result in tribal secessions to Imam Yahia on any large scale, Ibn Saud might be forced either to make war for the preservation of Asir or to acquiesce in the extension of his rival's rule over the whole of Asir. Either alternative would be full of peril both to our position in Arabia and to Anglo-Italian relations. Moreover, Ibn Saud's discomfiture in South-West Arabia, coming on the top of his difficulties with the

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more fanatical elements in Nejd and of his frontier troubles with Iraq and Transjordan, might shake his position to the verge of downfall. Such a consummation, with its resulting anarchy in the Arabian Peninsula and on our mandatory frontiers, must obviously be extremely detrimental to our present interests.

14. Italy's appearance in Arabia as a supporter of the pretensions of the Imam Yahia can hardly be regarded as friendly to us, for the Imam, apart from his past hostility to us and his continued occupation of sections of the Aden Protectorate, is obviously aiming at a territorial extension in Asir, which could only be secured by the discomfiture of Ibn Saud, whose maintenance is at present important to British interests. I think that this is the crux of the question, and that we must examine it frankly, firstly among ourselves and then with the Italians, in the hope of finding some solution which will safeguard Ibn Saud's position and our own interests without imposing any humiliation on the Imam Yahia and his Italian partisans.

15. I am inclined to think that a visit by Sir Gilbert Clayton to Ibn Saud would afford a good opportunity for a friendly discussion of all these problems and would perhaps help to allay many of Ibn Saud's anxieties and suspicions, which, if allowed to grow unchecked, may imperil his good relations with us.

I have, &c.

LLOYD, High Commissioner.

Enclosure in No. 5.

Ibn Saud to Lord Lloyd.

(Translation.)

(After Compliments.)

12 Jemadi-att-Thani, 1346.

(December 6, 1927.)

HAFIDH WAHBA has submitted to us a summary of the conversation between him and the secretary of your Excellency, and he informed us that the latter enquired whether he (Hafidh Wahba) wished the conversation to be communicated privately to the British Government. The secretary also indicated that he saw no hindrance to the establishment of a written connexion between us and your Excellency for the remedying of incidents which might happen in a circumstance like that which was discussed by Hafidh Wahba and the secretary of your Excellency. I am glad to open to your Excellency the question of the state of affairs in the Arabian Peninsula and of its relation to His Majesty's Government from some points of view, so that we may be able to remedy the present state of affairs in a manner conducive to the interests of both sides.

It is clear to your Excellency, and, indeed, to anyone who follows the history of our personal political relations with His Majesty's Government, which in our policy we have followed (that) these have never been opposed to His Majesty's Government. Always, on the other hand, we have avoided anything tending to create a difference between us and them, despite much that we found, and still find, in the behaviour of certain officials of His Majesty's Government, or in the behaviour of certain individuals who have sought British protection and whom the British Government still defend. Moreover, we have resisted and still resist the influence of certain Governments which desire supreme economic influence in the Arabian Peninsula, from our wish to protect British interests and to prevent their opponents from touching these interests at all. Therefore, the rights of our friendship to His Majesty's Government necessitate close attention to our interests and theirs, and our consistency in friendship should have its reward in friendly consideration.

In this connexion, I summarise for your Excellency the present position, in order that we may assist each other in so remedying it as to safeguard the interests of both parties. We have before us three important matters which need a remedy:—

1. The new attitude of Italy towards the Arabian Peninsula.
2. The position of the Shereefians in Iraq and Transjordan, more particularly in recent times. If the state of affairs in this respect be left as it is, it will produce evil results.
3. The attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the Arabian Peninsula and their conflict with British economic influence.

The British Government was, and still is, in closer relationship with the Arabian Peninsula than other Governments are. (Hitherto) we had not found any State competing with the British Government in this relationship. But recently Italy appeared in the Red Sea and she has begun to think of greatly extending her ambitions. Italy proposed to us that we should enter into agreement with her even before she interfered with the Imam Yahia. And this was at the beginning of our entry into the Hejaz. We did not wish to make this connexion because of our desire to strengthen our political relations with the British Government. When the Italian Government lost hope in this respect, it quickly turned to the Imam Yahia and concluded with him that commercial agreement which was published. We strongly suspect that the Italian Government followed this with a secret agreement, the effects of which appeared to us in its recent negotiations with us regarding its recognition of the Kingdom of the Hejaz and Nejd and its dependencies. The last demand of the Italian Government from us was that we should promise it to preserve in the Arabian Peninsula peace and tranquillity which constituted the goal of the Government of the King of Italy. The Italian Government brought the question of Asir into the discussion in a clear manner, inasmuch as it demanded that it should recognise us as King of the Hejaz and Nejd and its dependencies, with the exclusion of Asir from that recognition. What does Italy seek with this attitude? Does not the British Government see that this is an encroachment of Italy on the rights and national authority of the country (*i.e.*, Arabian Peninsula), and, secondly, that this is an act of Italy (intended) to strengthen and confirm her ally (Imam Yahia) against the British Government in the direction of his (Imam Yahia's) frontiers adjoining (the territory of) the British Government and against a friend of the British Government, as we, for our part, see it? And what a story Sir Gilbert Clayton told us, on the day of our meeting in Jeddah, that the result of his meeting in Rome with Cavaliere Gasparini was the notification to the Italian Government of the British Government's attitude, that the British Government do not wish to interfere in the affairs of the Arabian Peninsula and do not accept to see others interfering in its affairs. This attitude of the Italians I consider to be blameworthy, both with regard to us and to the British Government. As for ourselves, we have already instructed our Department for Foreign Affairs to inform the Italian Government that it should recognise our rights in all our territory without condition or reservation, or otherwise we do not require this its recognition. This is the situation with Italy. We want to be in complete agreement with the British Government in this matter, to protect our interests and theirs, and we expect good results to both parties, insha'llah, as a consequence of your study of this situation.

As for the question of the position of the Shereefians in Iraq and Transjordan, more particularly of recent times, it is unsatisfactory and augurs no future of calm and peace. If the matter was between ourselves and them only, it would be easy, and we should, with God's strength, put an end to it prudently. But between us and them there are the British Government and our pledges which it behoves us to keep, and our friendship with the British Government which we covet.

Since the Treaty of Hadda, which prohibited raiding, there has been from the Transjordan side an increase in the number and extent of raids by tribes of Transjordan upon the people of Nejd, and, despite all conversations and pacific negotiations, we have not been able to secure any of the loot; so much so that we are weary of claiming. The situation led us to leave to Sir Gilbert Clayton the solution of this matter, in accordance with the just investigation which the British Government carries out, but as yet we have obtained nothing. This is the attitude of Transjordan, whose tribal incursions against our tribes still continue till this day.

As for the Iraq situation, the Government of Iraq has ventured to break many of the articles of the agreements which existed between us, of which we present to you the following:—

1. The Shammar tribes took refuge in Iraq, and the Iraq Government incited them to seek refuge there. Then it incited them to raid us. It wanted, or those villains wanted, to raid us, and they were of one mind. They went out into Syrian territory to raid us from there. Of this the High Commissioner in Iraq notified us, and we protested against it, and said that if they raided us they would have to pass either through Transjordan territory or through Iraq territory. There was no reply to this protest of ours for about ten months, when his Excellency informed

us that the Government of Iraq, desirous to reassure us, had built a chain of forts and block-houses along the frontier, to prevent raiders from reaching us; while the third article of the Ojeir Protocol of the 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1341, prohibits either of the two parties from building on the waters [*sic*] and places on the frontier. This act was interpreted in Nejd as breach of a pledge, and the buildings as built only for the prejudice of Nejd. At the moment we are suffering the greatest difficulty on the frontier controlling the tribes from returning evil for evil. Four times have we protested against this, and we have warned the Resident in the Persian Gulf of evil results if pledges are not kept and the buildings razed. Up to this hour we have obtained no result, while the present position on the frontiers is most critical.

3 [*sic*]. The agreements between ourselves and Iraq and Transjordan forbid correspondence between one party and the Bedouin of the other party. But the Iraq Government has not abstained from that sort of thing. The latest to fall into our hands was a letter from the Mutesarif of Diwaniya inviting some of the leaders of our tribes to discuss various matters concerning the tribes. We protested against this to the High Commissioner in Iraq on the 1st Fabi-ul-Awwal, 1346. So far he has returned no reply to us.

4. From time to time motor cars of officials of the Iraq Government and aeroplanes continue to arrive and get mixed up with the Bedouin. This creates one of two circumstances: either a state of affairs in which the Bedouin who come in contact with them run away from the cars and behave towards the owners in a manner having deplorable consequences, so that afterwards a dispute arises, with discussions between us and them; or else a state of affairs where the interference is (intended) to affect some of the Bedouin, so that they follow the Iraq Government and to cause trouble within our country.

We have drawn the Iraq Government's attention to these matters more than once without obtaining anything at all from correspondence. This is a question which should, I consider, be solved prudently, because if the position remains as it is at present, it will expose our two countries to an unsatisfactory state of affairs (which God forbid!). Everyone knows how jealously we preserve our friendship with the British Government, even to the limit of our endeavour. I have exposed this situation to you so that you may form your opinion as to its remedy so as to establish between us and the British Government a clear basis with regard to the attitude of the Shereefians and their interference and their troubling of the pure affection existing between us and the British Government.

As for the third question, to wit, the attitude of the Soviet Government and its determination to acquire economic influence in Arabia, we declare to you frankly our opinion on this subject. From the very first we have adopted in the Hejaz measures conforming to the laws of free trade in the world, but, on the other hand, we have taken certain precautions to prevent the progress of their influence.

Facilities for trade with Russia might well be of advantage economically to our country, but in this we see manifest prejudice to the products of British territories. Although no commercial agreement at all exists between us and the British Government for the protection of their products, yet, from our desire to safeguard British interests and to resist their competitors, the Hejaz Government has adopted an attitude of which news must have reached you. But the Soviet spare no endeavour to approach us and to offer us important assistance, while they are situated near many Eastern countries. Still we continue to covet our friendship with the British Government, and I have exposed this matter to your Excellency that you may think of some way to remedy economic means [*sic*] to put economic relations on a sound footing between the two countries, and that you may also know from our attitude the measure of our desire to safeguard the interests of the British Government.

These three matters desire consideration and meditation. We have exposed them to your Excellency thus in detail, and we are confident that they will receive from your Excellency every attention and care. We hope that, thanks to your mediation, a solution of them may be reached safeguarding the interests of both parties.

Pray accept our highest respects.

(Seal of Ibn Saud.)

[E 484/484/91]

No. 6.

Consul Stonehever-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 33.)

(No. 2.)

Sir,

Jeddah, January 4, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith my report on the situation in the Hejaz for the period the 1st to 31st December, 1927.

Copies of this report are being sent to Egypt, Jerusalem (two), Jerusalem for transmission to the Royal Air Force officer commanding in Palestine and Transjordan, Bagdad, Aden, Delhi, Beirut, Damascus, Khartum through Port Sudan, Singapore, Lagos (two).

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

Enclosure in No. 6.

Jeddah Report for Period December 1 to 31, 1927.

THE month of December has been chiefly notable for the number of rumours current in the Sook—rumours of war and rumours of internal strife. Wild bazaar gossip is an epidemic which rages most strongly when, as at the present time, there is a slump in the pilgrim trade. Preparations were, the gossips told us, being made for war against Iraq and Transjordan. The Gut Gut, Ibn Bujad's tribe, had seized Taif. The latter rumour was later categorically denied, and the former appears to have arisen owing to the arrival at Jeddah and transport to Mecca of the cartridges and clips recently ordered in England. To effect the transport of this ammunition, camels were commandeered by the Government and no payment was made to the owners or drivers. The result was a strike lasting four days, during which time newly arrived Javanese pilgrims were obliged to delay their departure for Mecca.

2. Camelmen have, however, scored a valuable point this year. The idea has been instilled into the Javanese by certain leaders of religious thought, prompted beyond a doubt by interested parties, that to travel to Mecca by car is an act of impiety. If this view spreads, the outlook for those who have invested heavily in cars is poor. There are at present more than 300 cars equipped for the pilgrimage traffic, and it is believed that the total will reach 500 in the course of the next few months.

3. Though many of the more onerous regulations which the recent religious proclamation sought to impose, such as the compulsory wearing of a beard and the prohibition of jewellery and silk raiment, have been removed, there still remain certain restrictions unpalatable to European residents, notably the prohibition of the import of gramophones and, more bitter still, the strict rationing of strong liquor. As drinking to the strains of the gramophone is the staple recreation of a large section of the colony, the blow is hard.

4. Events on the Nejd-Iraq frontier have naturally formed a constant topic of conversation, and much ink has been spent thereon in the local press. The tone both of discussions and articles is conciliatory, though resentment is shown at the criticism of Ibn Saud in the English and especially in the Iraq press. It is felt that the King has loyally adhered to his engagements, and that Iraq, by establishing a post at Busaiyah without, by previous warning, affording the King an opportunity of explaining the situation to the frontier tribes, was asking for trouble. The press insists that the establishment of the post was a breach of the agreement, while the Director of Foreign Affairs, as the result of a study of the latest War Office map of the district, now considers the question debatable. In any event he holds the action of the Iraq authorities to have been, if not disloyal, discourteous and ill-advised. Ibn Saud, he affirms, is doing all in his power to counter Feisal-el-Derweish's action.

5. News from Asir has been scrappy, though Dr. Damluji recently stated that the conference at Jizan had reached a deadlock, that the Hejaz representative was being recalled to make his report, and that it was hoped to reassemble the conference at some other town, preferably Port Sudan, in a month's time.

6. Little progress appears to have been made towards the recognition by Italy of Ibn Saud. The Italian consul is conducting negotiations with Ibn Saud by post—a laborious and unsatisfactory arrangement. He has hopes, however, of evolving a "formula" acceptable to both parties.

7. The ranks of the consular corps have been swollen by the arrival of the new Turkish representative, Abdul Ghani Sunni, who styles himself "Représentant diplomatique de la République turque auprès des Gouvernements du Hédjaz et du Yémen." The Director of Foreign Affairs is frankly pleased that Abdul Ghani appears to be a man of much less ability than his predecessor, and so a lesser power for evil. He is unlikely to prove a social asset; he viewed with horror Dr. Cesano's proposal that he should join the weekly consular card parties.

8. The Emir Feisal pays regular visits to Jeddah, though his presence or absence either in Mecca or Jeddah has little or no effect on the conduct of affairs. Popular opinion has it that his concentration on the delights of his harem is such that he has neither time nor inclination for affairs of State. His appearance and conversation support this belief. It is regrettable that the only apparent quality he should have inherited from his father is his philoprogenitive instinct. In the absence of Ibn Saud, the Hejaz ship of State is indeed rudderless.

9. Under the heading of public works in progress may be noted the new condenser now being erected by two Scottish engineers from Merrilees Watson and the new motor road from Jeddah to Mecca. The former will be put into use before the Haj. There is much scepticism as to the lasting powers of the latter. The system adopted is to cover an 8-yard wide track of desert sand with large boulders, fill the interstices with smaller stones, and then crush the whole with the aid of the recently imported steam-roller. It is felt that in a short time the entire road will disappear into the bowels of the desert, though optimists give the road a two years' life.

10. An endeavour is being made by the Standard Oil Company, instigated by Mr. Philby, to oust Shell Petrol from the Jeddah market. If Mr. Philby's action was prompted by a disinterested desire to see a reduction in the price of petrol in the interests of the country he has succeeded. If, as is more probable, he wished to introduce Standard Oil as a proposition paying to the company which he manages, he has so far failed. The price of petrol has fallen from 10s. to 8s. a tin, and I understand that the Shell Company are both willing and able to undercut the rival company. Meanwhile, Mr. Philby's staff and offices increase in size and cost without any apparent reason. His expression of anti-British sentiments is a constant source of amazement to those who meet him for the first time and who fail to realise that he merely argues for the sake of argument, and that his bark is much worse than his bite. He is a nuisance rather than a power of evil; the King, I am convinced, though he likes and admires him, rarely takes him seriously.

11. The British colony, which already numbers fifteen, is to be increased by the advent of two engineers, one to take charge of the new condenser and the second to found a training school for chauffeurs and to supervise the Government workshops and garages.

12. The arrival of numbers of chauffeurs from India, Aden and the Sudan has resulted in an increasing number of complaints to the agency. The wages of a skilled chauffeur in the Hejaz reach £10 or even £12 a month, while the minimum wage is about £7. Indians, Sudanese and chauffeurs in Aden presumably claim much lower wages in their own countries; they sign contracts before embarking binding themselves for two years for a monthly wage of £3 or £4, and on arrival find that this is not a living wage. It would be well if publicity could be given to these facts with a view to deterring chauffeurs from making contracts for service at less than the rates of pay prevailing in the Hejaz.

13. During the period under review five slaves were repatriated.

14. Some 5,000 pilgrims, including 800 Malaysians, have already arrived for the 1928 Haj.

[E 629/1/91]

No. 7.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 7.)

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, February 7, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 1.

Minister for Foreign Affairs brought me a further letter from Ibn Saud, dated Riyadh, 25th January, and written before receipt of your message.

He insists that building of post was naturally regarded by tribes as a breach of Uqair protocol. He had previously refused permission to his Arabs to build at Lina

and other wells (Lina is more than 30 miles from the neutral zone) near frontier. His present situation is most difficult—he must either fight the whole of Nejd in support of Iraq or find himself in conflict with His Majesty's Government, an eventuality which he cannot face.

He begs His Majesty's Government to find a solution. I told Dr. Damluji that first step towards finding this solution lay in the King's acceptance of His Majesty's Government's invitation to meet Colonel Haworth. This meeting with a representative of His Majesty's Government, who could have no pro-Iraq bias, could not fail to clear the air and might well result in a final agreement.

There is no mention in the King's letter of invitation, though he speaks of a "warning" he has recently received.

[E 822/1/91]

No. 8.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 102.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, February 17, 1928.

MY despatch No. 39.

Hafez Wahba has communicated to me a letter dated 25th January, and addressed by Ibn Saud to His Majesty's agent at Jeddah.

Hafez Wahba has also received subsequent telegrams from Ibn Saud showing that the latter is much excited by our aerial action over Nejd territory.

Hafez Wahba is very insistent on the gravity of the situation and the need for prompt settlement of the question of desert fortifications. He even said that he was prepared to proceed to London if that would be helpful. He renewed his suggestion that some Imperial British delegate, being neither from Iraq nor Persian Gulf, should be sent at once to discuss the matter with Ibn Saud. He suggested Al Hassa as a suitable meeting place if some such British delegate could proceed there at once, flying from here to Iraq.

He suggested that at such a conference it would be advisable to discuss the important question of the surrender by Iraq and Nejd respectively of each other's offending subjects taking refuge in the other's territory.

I venture to urge expediency of sending Sir Gilbert Clayton, who enjoys the confidence of both Ibn Saud and Iraq, to meet Ibn Saud as soon as possible. Ibn Saud evidently feels that he is not getting a fair hearing. A conference between the two might effect a *détente*, and could anyhow do no harm.

I hope that you will be able to give me some encouraging message for communication to Hafez Wahba.

[E 787/1/91]

No. 9.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah.)

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, February 18, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 4 of 7th February: Busaiyah raid.

I entirely approve your language to Dr. Damluji. You should return a formal reply in similar sense to Ibn Saud on behalf of His Majesty's Government, adding an expression of their sympathy with him in his present difficulties and of their confidence that first step towards solution of these difficulties lies in proposed meeting.

[E 822/1/91]

No. 10.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 87.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, February 23, 1928.

YOUR despatch No. 39 of 14th January raises complicated problems which are being examined by His Majesty's Government.

Meanwhile your Lordship should sent an interim reply to Ibn Saud to the effect that His Majesty's Government thank him for the frank expression of his views,

are giving their sympathetic attention to the matters referred to in his letter, are considering how the difficulties to which he refers can best be met, and will send him a further reply when a decision has been reached on these points.

Your Lordship should add, with reference to subsequent message from Ibn Saud reported in your telegram No. 102 of 17th February, that, as regards his desire for a conference, His Majesty's Government continue to hold that the immediate necessity is that His Majesty should meet Colonel Haworth.

[E 908/80/91]

No. 11.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, February 24, 1928.

MY telegram No. 17 of 17th February: Air action in the Yemen.

It is reported from Aden that Zeidis have commenced aggression across the frontier of the Sheikh of Shaab, who has appealed for help. It may become necessary, on completion of action against Kataba, to take measures in the direction of Shaab.

You should inform the Italian Government.

[E 976/1/91]

No. 12.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 115.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Cairo, February 25, 1928.

MESSAGE contained in paragraph 1 of your telegram No. 87, which constitutes a reply to Ibn Saud's letter to me, is being handed to Hafez Wahba in the form of a letter for His Majesty.

If you think it absolutely necessary, I would propose to communicate verbally to Hafez Wahba message contained in second paragraph of your telegram, as it constitutes a reply to verbal communications by Hafez Wahba. My records contain no written communication from Ibn Saud regarding conference or delegation of Sir G. Clayton.

I would point out, however, that this second message would, I fear, be regarded as a snub. Hafez Wahba has repeatedly suggested a conference, and despatch of some impartial British delegate not being from Iraq or Persian Gulf. In reply, I am instructed simply to refer his master to His Majesty's Resident in the Persian Gulf. I would therefore urge a reconsideration of this second message, which seems to be impolitic as a reply to this particular request.

I would again urge desirability of immediate delegation of Sir G. Clayton or some other person in whom Ibn Saud would have confidence as not appearing to him of an *ex parte* character. I would point out in this connexion that delegation of Sir G. Clayton seemed to meet with approval of Sir H. Dobbs, who regarded as of little advantage a meeting between Ibn Saud and Colonel Haworth, in view of latter's slight acquaintance with frontier affairs of Iraq.

Pending receipt of your further instructions, I am suspending second message.

[E 992/1/91]

No. 13.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, February 26, 1928.

I HAVE received a long letter from Ibn Saud in reply to message contained in your telegram No. 1.

The King is gratified by the friendly spirit evinced by His Majesty's Government, but regrets that, owing to change in situation adduced by precipitate action on the part of British and Iraq officials, he cannot now accept invitation to meet the Resident of the Persian Gulf.

He fears that, if British officials continue to lend support to anti-Nejd policy of the Shereefs, the maintenance of order and of friendly relations between himself and His Majesty's Government will become increasingly difficult. He states that Uqair Protocol was only signed by him on express understanding that the wells frequented by his tribesmen should be freely accessible and that no building should be permitted.

He protests that, while he has killed many of his own tribesmen found guilty of raids into Iraq and Transjordan, raiders from those countries into Iraq [*sic*: ? Nejd] have escaped punishment. He had restrained the people of Nejd and discountenanced the acts of Faisal-al-Doweish. He had delayed sending out expedition against the latter until he could come to an agreement with Iraq that escaping raiders should not be harboured. The situation had improved when he was threatened that British aircraft would punish his subjects within his territory. He did not fail to warn Iraq of the consequences; aeroplanes have since dropped proclamations and bombs on Nejd soil. This act is breach of his independence. It has caused the death of innocent persons, rekindled Nejd passions and placed him in an impossible position. It has dealt a real blow at his friendly relations with Great Britain. The responsibility rests on Iraq and British officials. Fears of Nejd are further increased by the news of building at Mudawara in an unlimited area.

Ibn Saud protests against—

1. Breach of Uqair Protocol.
2. Incitement of Nejd tribes by Iraq officials to rebel.
3. Crossing of his frontiers by aeroplanes and attacking of innocent persons.
4. Building of post at Mudawara.

Ibn Saud appeals to His Majesty's Government as his sincere friends to consider carefully points of his protest and to use every endeavour to eradicate the seeds of ill-feeling sown by pursuance of Shereefian anti-Saud policy by officials in Iraq and Transjordan.

[E 994/484/91]

No. 14.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 17.)

Sir,

Jeddah, February 1, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith my report on the situation in the Hejaz for the period the 1st to 31st January, 1928, inclusive.

2. Copies of this report are being sent to Egypt, Jerusalem (2), Jerusalem for transmission to the Royal Air Force Officer Commanding in Palestine and Transjordan, Bagdad, Aden, Delhi, Beirut, Damascus, Khartum through Port Sudan, Singapore, Lagos (2).

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

Enclosure in No. 14.

Jeddah Report for the Period January 1 to 31, 1928.

NEJD-IRAQ relations have continued to furnish the subject-matter of leading articles in the press. The breach of the Uqair protocol is still insisted on; Iraq is accused, moreover, of having harboured Nejd criminals convicted of raids on Iraq. Yusuf-es-Sadun and Mohammed-el-Turki are cited as examples of Nejd raiders who took refuge in Iraq to escape just punishment by Ibn Saud.

2. In the matter of the frontier incidents, public opinion may be divided into three camps: the pro-Saud element holds that Feisal-el-Derweish acted in direct opposition to Ibn Saud's wishes and instructions. A small anti-Saud party believes the raids to have been undertaken at the King's instigation; this party argues that Ibn Saud's policy has ever been to send out "unofficial" raiding parties, and to take credit for the result or to disclaim responsibility, according to the exigencies of the moment. The third view, which is current with a very small minority, is that the events were engineered by His Majesty's Government in their own interests.

The arguments are far-fetched but ingenious. His Majesty's Government expected difficulty in persuading Iraq to ratify a treaty whereunder military control of the country remained in British hands. They therefore required proof that the security of Iraq depended on the presence of British forces; they caused a post to be built at Busaiyah knowing that this would provoke an attack—to be repulsed by British arms.

3. His Majesty's High Commissioner for Iraq has reported that a meeting was to take place in the last week of this month between Ibn Saud and Feisal-el-Derweish in the presence of the ulema of Nejd. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has no confirmation, but considers it natural that Feisal-el-Derweish should be called upon to answer for his actions before the assembled body of the ulema.

4. A party of four of the leading Ikhwan recently arrived in Mecca from Nejd. Rumours had been current in Nejd of an intention on the part of Ibn Saud to build a railway from Jeddah to Mecca and from Mecca to Medina. Ibn Saud, to prove the rumours false, invited this party to visit Mecca. The new road from Jeddah to Mecca proved to have given rise to their suspicions. The Emir Feisal accompanied the party to a point where the work is nearing completion, and explained that what they saw was a motor road and not a track on which railway lines could or would be laid.

5. The road is not making the hoped-for progress. The weight of the steam-roller is blamed for the present somewhat unsatisfactory results, though the genuineness of this excuse is largely discounted by the fact that those employing it are commercially interested in the import of a lighter type of roller. There are two admirable reasons for the poor surface of the new road: Suleiman Pasha, ex-Turkish Minister for War, who is in charge of the work, has probably a good working knowledge of military matters, but knows nothing of road-making. Raghama, where the roller is now working, is 8 miles from Jeddah, the nearest point from which water is obtainable; there are three small water-carts (tanks mounted on Ford chassis), but the supply so transported falls far short of requirements.

6. The Italian consul, finding that the negotiations which he has been conducting by correspondence with Ibn Saud relative to Italian recognition are leading to no useful result, has suggested to his Government that he should await the return of the King to the Hejaz before making any further proposals. I gather that my colleague has been authorised to offer recognition to Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz, Nejd and their Dependencies, Asir not to be mentioned specifically, but a separate unpublished note to be addressed to Ibn Saud stating that Italy has no knowledge of the Treaty of Mecca. A simple acknowledgment of this letter would satisfy the Italians. Ibn Saud, however, wished to be recognised by Italy as their Powers have recognised him, namely, as King of the Hejaz, Nejd and their Dependencies. The Italians may make what mental reservations they wish, but he, Ibn Saud, cannot take cognisance of the reservations. Were he to do so, he would be weakening his position in Asir *vis-à-vis* the Imam. It is difficult at present to conceive of a formula satisfactory to Ibn Saud and the Italian Government which does not at the same time offend the Imam, though Dr. Cesano still hopes that in private conversation with the King he will succeed where correspondence has failed.

7. The new coins struck by the mint, Birmingham, are now in circulation. They are to be known as "Arab" dollars, half-dollars, quarter-dollars and piastres. The £ sterling remains the basis of exchange, which is fixed at 10 dollars or 220 piastres to the £. The coins are not inartistic. If they are circulated in sufficient numbers to meet local requirements during the pilgrimage season, exchange should remain more stable than in previous years, when a shortage has regularly resulted in an appreciable rise in the exchange value of the silver currency.

8. There is, with the increase of commercial activity consequent on the greater influx of pilgrims, a growing need for properly established courts of justice. At present the only courts in existence are the Shariah Courts, which administer justice based on the precepts of the Koran. There is naturally no provision for the settlement of questions relating to goods on consignment, drafts, bills and indeed any normal modern commercial operations. Many such operations are, in fact, definitely illegal by Shariah law. Certain cases can, it is true, at the demand of both parties be settled by the Mejlis-ul-Tujjar, but there is often one party which sees advantage in obtaining a judgment in the Shariah Court. Moreover, the decision of the Mejlis-ul-Tujjar is not final—appeal to the Shariah Court at Mecca is possible to either party, and the case is once again tried by religious law. If there are no law courts, there are no lawyers, and consequently little litigation. Cases between

Europeans or foreign-protected persons are almost invariably settled by arbitration by the respective consuls of the parties concerned.

9. Another result of the increased commercial activity in the Hejaz is the pressing need for new houses. Rents are being raised annually, but are still not sufficiently high to induce local capitalists to build. The population of Jeddah is increasing rapidly, but there is practically no room within the city walls for expansion. If security continues a time will soon come when a new residential quarter must be started outside the city walls.

10. The pilgrimage season may now be said to have started. More than 30,000 pilgrims have already arrived from overseas, mostly from Batavia and Singapore. Four Indian pilgrim ships have already arrived, bringing 1,272 pilgrims; two more are expected in the first days of February. It is generally hoped that the pilgrimage from India will be slightly larger than last year; this increase will, however, be discounted by a falling off in the number of Malays. There is as yet no indication of the numbers likely to proceed from Persia or North Africa. The total pilgrimage from overseas is expected to reach 150,000, an increase of some 10 per cent. on last year's total.

11. Cars are being introduced in such numbers that the Government has decided to limit the import. All cars already on order may be imported, but thereafter every fresh order must first be officially sanctioned and an import licence obtained. This new restriction is introduced ostensibly in the interests of all car owners. There are already some 500 cars registered for the pilgrimage traffic. Competition is so strong that cars are in most cases running at a loss. The Government rate for the return journey—Jeddah-Medina—is £15, of which £6 represents Government tax. Owners are accepting as low a fare as £10. The Government has raised the tax on camel hire without raising the fares themselves. Fodder has increased in price. The result was a strike of camelmen at Medina. The rivalry between car and camel and between the motor companies will certainly react in favour of the pilgrim in ensuring him cheap fares, but the Hejaz will suffer. Last year the Hejaz was the car owner's paradise. This year it is a chauffeur's paradise. Last year's experience taught the wisdom of securing the services of reliable chauffeur-mechanics. Fifteen pounds a month can now be claimed by an efficient mechanic.

12. As cases of plague were reported both in Egypt and at Aden, several ships were quarantined during the month. All coolies who have been on board a ship not out of quarantine are sent to the quarantine island for five days. They demand and receive from the shipping agents full pay for the whole period of their stay on the island, in spite of the fact that in most cases they could have earned nothing during that period. The Government has ordered from Egypt sufficient anti-plague serum for the inoculation of 10,000 persons. The Dutch bacteriologist continues his work under most difficult conditions. On a recent occasion he left his Syrian assistant in charge of the vaccination of babies. On his return he found the Syrian smoking a cigarette upstairs and a large buck nigger engaged in the work of vaccinating one patient after another without changing, sterilising or even wiping the needle. Dr. van der Hoog wonders in face of such doings whether his work will result in the prevention or the spread of disease. He is seriously considering the advisability of embracing Islam, feeling that unless he can visit Mecca and Medina his work can be of little real value. He has great hopes of interesting American philanthropists in his work and of building a large modern hospital staffed by American trained assistants. He would like to see the hospital so established controlled by a committee of three of the consuls of the Powers represented at Jeddah. He would probably have more success in interesting America than in inducing the Government to agree to any such foreign control.

13. Amin Tewfik, the Egyptian consul at Jeddah, left for Cairo on the 15th. He was deservedly popular with the European colony and with the Hejaz authorities. Though not of great experience, he handled the many delicate questions which fell to him to negotiate with considerable tact. I learn unofficially and privately that his successor, Said Bey, late consul at Jerusalem, is out of favour with the Egyptian Foreign Office and is being sent to Jeddah as a punishment. This is difficult to believe as relations between the Hejaz and Egypt are such that a tactless or incompetent representative could cause much friction.

14. Khakimoff, the Soviet representative, arrived at Jeddah on the 21st instant. He left here in September last in a very poor state of health, and was undergoing treatment in Europe when recalled to his post. The Tomp incident, to which

reference was made in the Jeddah report for November last, provoked his recall. It was felt that Tumetoff, the Chargé d'Affaires in Khakimoff's absence, had mishandled the situation. Tumetoff twice went to Mecca just before his chief's arrival to press the authorities to accord a ceremonial reception to Khakimoff on landing at Jeddah. Dr. Damluji refused on the score that it is customary throughout the world to welcome foreign representatives with pomp and ceremony only on first arrival and on final departure. Khakimoff on arrival has opened his heart to the Italian consul; he is very bitter against His Majesty's Government, who, he says, have persistently sought to discredit the Soviet régime by the production and publication of falsified documents.

15. Shipping statistics recently prepared for the Board of Trade show that 223 British ships visited Jeddah in 1927 as against 170 in 1926. The respective tonnages for the two years were as follows:—

1926	...	...	...	...	...	351,486
1927	...	...	...	...	...	572,001

The increase is due entirely to the increase in size of the pilgrimage, which resulted not only in the visits of more pilgrim ships but in increased imports.

16. The number of slaves manumitted and repatriated during the month was three.

[E 995/1/91]

No. 15.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 18.)
Sir,

Jeddah, February 10, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of a letter of the 25th ultimo addressed to me by King Ibn Saud from Riyadh. On this letter and on Dr. Damluji's comments thereon was based my telegram No. 4 of the 7th instant.

2. The King had unfortunately at the time of writing not received the communication addressed to him in accordance with the instructions contained in your telegram No. 1 of the 13th January.

3. He makes no mention of His Majesty's Government's invitation to meet Colonel Haworth, though I gather from paragraph 15 of Bagdad Intelligence Report No. 1 of 1928 that the invitation accompanied a protest against the Mutair raid of the 9th December, and the "warning" referred to by him in the second paragraph of the King's letter may be the "invitation."

4. Ibn Saud has received Hafez Wahba's report from Koweit; he is surprised that the building of a post at Busaya is not regarded as a breach of the Uqair protocol. He gives as evidence that it must be so considered his own refusal to allow Nejd tribes to build at Lina and other water holes near the frontier. Lina is more than 30 miles in a straight line from the nearest point of the neutral zone.

5. The King is convinced that the building of the Busaya post was an act of intentional provocation calculated to cause friction between himself and Feisal-ud-Doweish.

6. The King views with disfavour the proposal conveyed through Hafez Wahba that the question of building should be referred to a commission of arbitration. He wishes the question to be settled as between himself and His Majesty's Government, and is confident that the latter will see the justice of his contention.

7. He then draws the attention of His Majesty's Government to the very critical position in which he now stands. He is faced with one of two risks: either to silence Nejd opinion by force of arms, and the whole of Nejd may be against him, or by not doing so to find himself in conflict with His Majesty's Government—an alternative opposed both to his wishes and to the interests of Arabia.

8. He begs His Majesty's Government to find a solution to his difficulties by removing the present causes of friction; a definite settlement must be arrived at, both as regards the building of posts and the harbouring by Iraq of Nejd raiders.

9. I discussed the King's letter very fully with the Director of Foreign Affairs before despatching my telegram under reference. I told Dr. Damluji that I would certainly telegraph, but that I could not wire the letter *in extenso*, first because I had already reported the Nejd point of view fully by despatch, and His Majesty's letter brought out no new points, and, secondly, because the communication which on your

instruction I had addressed to Ibn Saud was an answer to the King's request for your assistance. I begged Dr. Damluji to use all his influence to induce Ibn Saud to accept the invitation to meet the Political Resident at Bushire. Colonel Haworth was entirely independent of Iraq and could have no anti-Nejd bias.

10. As regards Ibn Saud's accusation against Iraq of harbouring Nejd raiders, I pointed out that the persons referred to were claimed by Iraq as Iraqi subjects. Ibn Saud fears that if Feisal-ud-Doweish takes refuge in Iraq he will be harboured there. I said that I thought his fears in this respect were surely groundless.

11. Neither the production of maps nor photographs will, I fear, convince Ibn Saud that Iraq were justified in building a post at Busaya. He understood the wells in the vicinity of the frontier to mean all wells in the desert area usually frequented by tribes of both sides. His refusal to allow building to be carried on around wells in his own territory is evidence of his belief. In the absence of any mention in the protocol of a definite prohibited radius, it is certainly difficult to say at what distance from the frontier posts may be erected without infringing the terms of the agreement.

12. It is obvious that on a strict interpretation of the wording of the protocol the building at Busaya does not constitute a breach of agreement; at the same time it is difficult to deny that Iraq's action in erecting the post without previous reference to Ibn Saud was at least dangerous. It is perhaps worthy of note that the Busaya post was not included in the scheme submitted to the Colonial Office in June, 1927. It was added subsequently at the instance of the Iraq Ministry of the Interior, and the scheme as amended was presented to Ibn Saud, perhaps without further reference to His Majesty's Government. My authority for this statement is to be found in the enclosure (Nos. 6, 7, 8) to Sir H. Dobbs's letter to the Colonial Office, Secret "A," of the 31st December last.

13. Ibn Saud, Dr. Damluji and, indeed, all persons conversant with conditions in the Iraq-Nejd desert area, are agreed that the Iraq Government could not fail to have known that the erection of a post of whatever nature at Busaya would result in inflaming the passions of the Bedouins of Nejd.

14. Not even the most violent anti-Iraq elements seek to justify the raids; they merely assert that they are the regrettable but inevitable outcome of Iraq's unwise and provocative action.

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

Enclosure in No. 15.

Ibn Saud to Consul Stonehewer-Bird.

(Translation.)

(After greetings and respects.)

WE sent your Excellency on the 23rd December, 1927, a letter to forward to the British Government about the situation in Iraq and the Persian Gulf, and are still waiting for the reply through your Excellency.

2. We then received a warning with reference to certain unsatisfactory acts committed by Ed Doweish, like those which the Iraq and Transjordan Arabs continue to commit in our territories, that the British Air Force in Iraq will attack peaceful people in revenge for Ed Doweish.

3. We have finally received the result of the private discussion between Sheikh Hafez Wahba, our representative to the Koweit Conference, and his Excellency the High Commissioner for Iraq. The latter says that it is impossible to pull down the buildings and that the third clause does not help us to protest.

4. If clauses of treaties do not help us in a protest to maintain our rights, what else can help us to maintain them?

5. For building is an infraction of the agreement between us and Iraq.

6. We ourselves prevented our Arabs from building round the water holes, Erruaa, Lina, Om Radhneeh and El Makhadha in fulfilment of our promise.

7. When the time comes to discuss the doings of Ed Doweish, we will have evidence to prove that it is the Iraq Government who caused the actions of Ed Doweish and encouraged others to act like him.

8. We do not raise this point now, but we should like to draw attention of the British Government to the critical position in which we are now placed.

9. It was mentioned in the private conversation between Sheikh Hafez Wahba and his Excellency the High Commissioner for Iraq that the dispute concerning the

buildings erected is to be referred to a commission of arbitration, but we do not wish this question to be solved otherwise than between ourselves and the British Government because our friendly relations with them make us believe that the just members of the British Government will see that we are right in our claim.

10. As to the critical position in which we now find ourselves, we believe that we owe it to the shereefs residing in Iraq and Transjordan. Unless such questions are solved in a manner which will ensure the maintenance and fulfilment of our mutual obligations, and unless agreement is reached concerning the guilty, we shall arrive at one of two ends which will be those the shereefs seek.

11. We cannot contemplate either end nor do we like to do so. That is, if the situation remains the same, we shall have either to rise up and fight against all the people of Nejd to silence them as regards the present situation and acts of the Iraq Government or to fall into a great dispute with the British Government.

12. Neither of these alternatives is in the present or future interests of the Arabs or the British Government. Both, as the British Government, the friend, will see, have bad results.

13. If the British Government wish to be our real friends, as we believe they do, and wish to have a powerful and faithful friend among the Arabs, who will maintain their interests as he does with his own and those of his people, they might devise some plan to rescue us from this critical position of complicated and entangled affairs.

14. We therefore await anxiously to receive the opinion of the British Government concerning both the buildings unnecessarily and unjustifiably erected and also those who ran away from punishment to the territories of the other party. We also ask their opinion as regards those officials of the Iraq Government who come in their cars to intrigue among the tribesmen.

15. We earnestly hope that the British Government will deal with this question in a spirit which will remove the cause of the dispute and get us out of the difficult position in which we now find ourselves.

16. We beg you to have this communicated promptly to the British Government, and to expedite the reply as the situation is very critical.

With best respects.

IBN SAUD

[E 1033/1/91]

No. 16.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 120.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, February 27, 1928.

FOLLOWING telegram from Ibn Saud to Hafez Wahba communicated to me by the latter:—

"Bahrein, February 23, 1928.

"Situation in Nejd is disturbed because undertakings were broken by Iraq. Aeroplanes have bombarded frontiers in east and west. Humanity has not been respected. Situation is very dangerous. Efforts are [? omitted: being] made to tranquillise conditions. Result is unknown.—ABD-EL-AZIZ."

[E 1079/1/91]

No. 17.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 29.)

(No. 131.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, February 29, 1928.

MY telegram No. 102 and Bagdad telegram No. 110 to Colonial Office.

Sheikh Hafez Wahba urges necessity of immediate action to save situation before it is too late. He points out that Ibn Saud and he have urged repeatedly the danger of these desert fortifications and of aerial action against Nejd (see my private telegram of 9th January and my telegram No. 102). Now their warnings are being realised. It is absolutely necessary, Hafez Wahba argues, to give Ibn Saud the moral [*sic*: ? defensive] arms with which to restrain tribes, now thoroughly roused by Anglo-Iraqi action. Hafez Wahba suggested that Iraq Government should in

the interest of peace between Nejd and Iraq demolish fort of Baswa and enter into negotiations with Ibn Saud. The latter's hand would be able to bring tribes to reason.

2. It was pointed out to Hafez Wahba that this would be too much to ask of Iraq. He then suggested that Iraq should inform Ibn Saud that if peace was restored and punishment inflicted on guilty Mutair the fort in question would be destroyed. Hafez Wahba thinks this would be enough to restore Ibn Saud's authority over excited tribes.

3. I pass on Hafez Wahba's proposals without comments for your information. (Repeated to Bagdad.)

[E 976/1/91]

No. 18.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 99.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, February 29, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 115 of 25th February: Message to Ibn Saud.

You will see from my immediately preceding telegram that Ibn Saud has now definitely declined to meet Colonel Haworth, so it is unnecessary for you to deliver the second message.

[E 1089/1/91]

No. 19.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird (No. 13) to Government of India.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received March 1.)

(No. 8.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, March 1, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 331 S. repeated to Secretary of State.

Situation in Hejaz has not been affected by events on Nejd border. Haj prospects remain good. No news has reached me as to Imam's intention to move; on the contrary, there are indications that he is anxious to come to an agreement with Ibn Saud.

(Repeated to Aden.)

[E 1205/1/91]

No. 20.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 7.)

(No. 11.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, March 7, 1928.

MY telegram No. 7.

I learn from a reliable source that Ibn Saud intends to spend last days of Ramazan at Mecca, and that cars for his transport have already left for Riyadh. This news may be taken as evidence that King is confident of an improvement in situation, as he would otherwise hesitate to leave Nejd.

(Repeated to Cairo, Bagdad, Jerusalem and Bushire, No. 18.)

[E 1225/1/91]

No. 21.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 150.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, March 8, 1928.

WITH reference to Bushire telegram No. 290 of 3rd March to me reporting despatch of note to Ibn Saud on 26th February from Bahrein, Hafez Wahba says that mere suspension of operations will not be enough to enable Ibn Saud to restrain

[18296]

tribes. Nejd tribesmen have, according to Hafez Wahba, accused Ibn Saud of abetting British offensive against Nejd. He earnestly reiterates his previous suggestion, viz., that His Majesty's Government should give Ibn Saud a written assurance that if peace is restored and punishment inflicted by him on the guilty, the fort of Baswa will be demolished. An assurance would also be necessary that if Ibn Saud takes punitive action against tribesmen and any of them fly to Iraq or Koweit we will surrender fugitives to him. With these two written assurances Hafez Wahba thinks Ibn Saud could get tribesmen under control and chastise Feisal-al-Dawish and his followers.

Hafez Wahba lays stress on urgency of action in the above sense. If long delayed it may become impracticable.

I have not sufficient local data on which to judge whether the two above-mentioned assurances would indeed enable Ibn Saud to recover control of tribes and punish the guilty, and I can only estimate situation as viewed from Cairo. But if there is a fair chance that such would be the result of these assurances I think they should be considered.

From telegram I have received from Resident, Persian Gulf, it would appear that gravity of the situation has already decided His Majesty's Government to notify Ibn Saud of their intention to suspend air action which has so dangerously excited Nejd tribesmen. This concession would appear to be almost as great as that which would be involved in an undertaking to raze the fort of Baswa after restoration of tranquillity and punishment of guilty.

(Repeated to Jeddah, Bagdad, Jerusalem and Bushire.)

[E 1226/1/91]

No. 22.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 151.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, March 8, 1928.

FOLLOWING is continuation of my immediately preceding telegram:—

Any general Arab conflagration against us is going to embarrass us seriously in Egypt and elsewhere throughout the Near and Middle East. Such concession would therefore appear justifiable to obviate such situation, but actual implementation of these assurances could of course only be made after Ibn Saud had fulfilled his part of the bargain.

(Repeated to Jeddah, Bagdad, Jerusalem and Bushire.)

[E 1227/1/91]

No. 23.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 152.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, March 8, 1928.

JEDDAH telegram No. 11 to you.

Hafez Wahba states that these cars left about thirteen days ago in accordance with long-standing orders, and that this fact cannot be taken as a proof of King's immediate return to Mecca, which Hafez Wahba thinks unlikely in present critical circumstances in Nejd, and Hafez Wahba has an arrangement with Ibn Saud by which Ibn Saud is to announce to the former his departure from Riyadh for Mecca in time for telegram to reach Cairo at latest on day of His Majesty's actual start from Riyadh.

Hafez Wahba is telegraphing to Emir Faisal, Ibn Saud's son at Mecca, to ask for precise news of King's movements, and will communicate reply to me.

(Repeated to Jeddah, Bagdad, Jerusalem and Bushire.)

[E 1251/1/91]

No. 24.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 9.)

(No. 157.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, March 9, 1928.

MY telegram No. 152.

Hafez Wahba informs me that he has received telegram from Emir Feisal to the effect that the latter has no certain news of his father's movements.

Hafez Wahba thinks that if Ibn Saud's return to Mecca was really imminent, Feisal could hardly be without definite news thereof.

(Repeated to Bagdad, Bushire, Jerusalem and Jeddah.)

[E 1185/80/91]

No. 25.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 305.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 10, 1928.

WITH reference to the conversations conducted last year by your Excellency and Sir Gilbert Clayton with representatives of the Italian Government regarding British and Italian interests in Arabia, I transmit a copy of a despatch received from Lord Lloyd, in which is enclosed a copy of a letter from Ibn Saud.

2. The most important matter dealt with in this letter is Italian policy in Arabia, in regard to which His Majesty complains of interference in Arabian affairs of a nature unfriendly both to himself and to His Majesty's Government. He refers specifically to Italian support of the Imam Yahia's claim to Asir, which is, as Lord Lloyd observes, the crux of the question.

3. It was agreed that the two Governments should frankly interchange information on matters of mutual interest in Arabia, and in these circumstances it appears to His Majesty's Government desirable that the situation revealed by Ibn Saud's letter should be made known to the Italian Government. I shall therefore be glad if you will inform them of the impression produced upon Ibn Saud by his interpretation of the attitude of the local Italian officials and of the suspicions which he entertains of the trend of Italian policy.

4. You should, in so doing, make it plain to them that His Majesty's Government have no desire, in communicating to them the information at their disposal as to Ibn Saud's apprehensions, to imply that they themselves regard his fears as justified. His Majesty's Government are themselves satisfied that the Italian Government are honourably observing the engagements undertaken at Rome in regard to their policy in Arabia.

5. The fact, however, that Ibn Saud is under the impression that the Italian Government are encouraging the Imam against him and are actively backing the Imam's claim to Asir is of importance in its possible effects on the interests of both countries in Arabia.

6. In accordance with the understanding reached during the Rome conversations and in deference to Italian representations, His Majesty's Government have not yet formally recognised Ibn Saud's suzerainty over Asir deriving from his treaty with the Idrisi. They hope, therefore, that the Italian Government on their side may find it possible to take such steps as they may consider desirable and effective to reassure Ibn Saud as to their own policy.

7. In this connexion your Excellency should remind the Italian Government that Imam Yahia has for some years been in occupation of part of the territory of the Aden Protectorate and any strengthening of his prestige and power by Italy may not only alarm Ibn Saud, whose intimate relations with His Majesty's Government are of long standing, but may also render more difficult a solution of this question of the Aden Protectorate, which cannot be allowed to remain open indefinitely.

8. An interim reply has been sent to Ibn Saud through Lord Lloyd to the effect that His Majesty's Government thank him for the frank expression of his views, are giving their sympathetic attention to the matters referred to in his letter, are considering how the difficulties to which he refers can best be met, and will send him a further reply when a decision has been reached on these points.

9. The Colonial Office are at the same time being asked to consider what can be done to meet Ibn Saud's complaints regarding his relations with Iraq and Transjordan. I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[E 1309/1/91]

No. 26.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 12.)

(No. 13.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, March 11, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 6 and Cairo telegram No. 152.

The belief in well-informed local circles, official and unofficial, is that the King will leave Riyadh at latest just after Eid. A further indication that the King will not long delay his departure is afforded by reliable information that delegation from Imam Yahya to Ibn Saud, which has been waiting in Asir for news of the King's intentions, has now been invited to proceed to Mecca.

(Confidential.)

My telegram No. 11 was based on a conversation at Mecca between Assistant Viceroy and a member of my staff; latter gathered that cars had left on instructions just received from Riyadh.

(Repeated to Cairo, Jerusalem, Bagdad and Bushire, No. 20.)

[E 1320/1/91]

No. 27.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 12.)

(No. 163.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, March 12, 1928.

RESIDENT'S telegram No. 9 T. of 10th March to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Hafez Wahba thinks that if communiqué is made to Ibn Saud in following sense it will be possible for him to proceed to Jeddah and to get tribes to suspend any action pending outcome of negotiations:—

"His Majesty's Government have taken into sympathetic consideration your Majesty's various complaints and suggestions about recent difficulties in connexion with Iraq and Transjordan. His Majesty's Government think these questions cannot be satisfactorily discussed by letter, and they therefore suggest that your Majesty should receive as soon as possible at Jeddah Sir G. Clayton, who will be delegated by His Majesty's Government to examine with your Majesty in friendliest spirit all matters in dispute and to make every effort to arrive at a settlement satisfactory to your Majesty."

Hafez Wahba says letters via Bahrein reach Riyadh quicker than via Jeddah. (Repeated to Bagdad, Bushire, Jerusalem and Jeddah.)

[E 1362/1362/91]

No. 28.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 14.)

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, March 13, 1928.

MASTER of Khedivial steamship "Mansourah" reports that on arrival off Wejh on 3rd March he was warned not to approach owing to disturbance in the town.

Disturbance was, according to official and unofficial information, result of family quarrel between Hamid Rifada, of the Belhi tribe, and his cousin the Amir of Wejh. I am assured that the disturbance was purely local and had no political significance; Khedivial agent at Wejh has telegraphed that the "Mansourah" can call and discharge cargo on return voyage.

(Repeated to Cairo, Jerusalem and Bagdad, and Bushire, No. 21.)

[E 1386/1/91]

No. 29.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird (No. 23) to High Commissioner, Jerusalem.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received March 14.)

(No. 15.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, March 13, 1928.

S.N.O., Red Sea Sloops, asks if there is any confirmation of press news that Wahabis are approaching to attack Transjordan in Maan district.

I have no confirmation, though a report has reached me that a small force of about 400 has left Mecca for frontier; it is also believed in certain well-informed circles that an attack on Transjordan in the near future is not improbable.

(Repeated to Red Sea Sloops, Cairo, Bagdad, Bushire, No. 23.)

[E 1396/1/91]

No. 30.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah).

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, March 15, 1928.

PLEASE convey following message from His Majesty's Government to Ibn Saud as quickly as possible; in sending it you should explain that it is also being sent through Resident in the Persian Gulf:—

"His Majesty's Government have received your Majesty's messages addressed to them through the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf and His Majesty's consul at Jeddah, and wish your Majesty to know at once that, in their desire to remove the present misunderstandings and to restore the amicable relations which have hitherto existed between your Majesty and themselves, they are prepared to despatch immediately Sir Gilbert Clayton to discuss all outstanding questions with your Majesty and attempt to resolve present difficulties. His Majesty's Government will be glad to learn at the earliest possible date whether your Majesty wishes to avail yourself of this opportunity for frank discussion with Sir G. Clayton, and when and where your Majesty will be prepared to receive him. His Majesty's Government would suggest that Jeddah would be convenient venue for the discussion."

(Addressed to Jeddah, No. 7. Repeated to Cairo, No. 130.)

[E 1320/1/91]

No. 31.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 131.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, March 15, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 163 of 12th March: Nejd-Iraq situation.

You will have seen from my telegram No. 7 to Jeddah that communication has been sent to Ibn Saud in very similar terms to those suggested by Hafez Wahba. You should thank latter for his advice, which corresponds to conclusion already reached by His Majesty's Government as to best hope of reaching settlement.

(Addressed to Cairo, No. 131. Repeated to Jeddah, No. 8, and Bagdad.)

[E 1458/1/91]

No. 32.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 19)

(No. 29.)

Sir,

Jeddah, February 27, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of a letter from Ibn Saud dated the 7th February.* The letter, a summary of which was communicated to you in my telegram No. 7 of the 26th instant, is most disappointing in that Ibn Saud,

* Not printed.

while expressing appreciation of His Majesty's Government's sympathy and desire to promote an understanding, states his inability to meet Colonel Haworth.

2. Apart from this refusal, the main interests in the letter lies in Ibn Saud's protest against the use of aeroplanes in his territory. He regards such action as a breach of his sovereign independence.

3. While reasserting his friendship for Great Britain, he protests against British policy in Iraq and Transjordan, a policy in his opinion unduly favourable to the Shereefs. He instances (1) the Treaty of Mohammerah, and (2) the lack of zeal displayed by British officials in insisting on the punishment of raiders instigated by Feisal and Abdullah.

4. He maintains his attitude with regard to the establishment of a post at Busaiyah. He was unwilling to sign the Uqair Protocol and would not have done so, had he not been convinced that thereunder free access was guaranteed to wells normally frequented by his tribesmen. In spite of his feeling of resentment at this breach of treaty obligations he has restrained his tribesmen and discountenanced Feisal-ed-Doweish's action. If he has delayed in sending a punitive expedition against the latter, it is because he has no assurance from Iraq that refugees will not be harboured.

5. He maintains that the further outbreak of raiding was due to the threat to use aeroplanes against his tribesmen and to the Iraq Premier's expressed desire to send an expedition into Nejd.

6. The dropping in his territory of bombs and proclamations had rekindled the passions of the tribesmen and placed him as a friend of Great Britain in an impossible position. He could not hope to silence his subjects in the face of this insult to them.

7. The fears of the Nejd are further increased by information that a post is being built at Mudawara. Mudawara is in territory exclusively inhabited by Nejd and in which the frontiers have not yet been fixed.

8. Ibn Saud sums up by a formal protest against:—

- (1.) The breach of the Uqair Protocol by the building of posts on the frontier.
- (2.) The endeavour by Iraq officials to incite Nejd tribesmen to rebel against him.
- (3.) The crossing of the Nejd frontier by aeroplanes and the dropping of warnings.
- (4.) The breach of international law involved in the bombing of peaceful inhabitants.
- (5.) The building of a post at Mudawara.

9. The King ends his letter with an expression of his confidence that His Majesty's Government will carefully study the points of his protest and will endeavour to extricate him from the impossible position into which he has been thrust by the policy pursued in Iraq.

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

[E 1460/484/91]

No. 33.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 19.)

(No. 31.)

Jeddah, March 1, 1928.

Sir, I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith my report on the situation in the Hejaz for the period the 1st to 29th February, 1928.

2. Copies of this report are being sent to Egypt, Jerusalem (2), Jerusalem for transmission to the Royal Air Force Officer Commanding in Palestine and Transjordan, Baghdad, Aden, Delhi, Beirut, Damascus, Khartum through Port Sudan, Singapore, Lagos (2).

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

Enclosure in No. 33.

Jeddah Report for the Period February 1 to 29, 1928.

DURING the past month events on the Nejd-Iraq frontier have provoked long leading articles in each issue of the "Um-el-Qura." Jaafar Pasha's statement was commented on at length, and much resentment was felt at his remark that, diplomatic action having failed, recourse must be had to force and an expedition sent into Nejd. If, the "Um-el-Qura" asserts, expeditions are to be sent against Nejd raiders, a similar right must be granted to Nejd to pursue and chastise Iraqi raiders in Iraq territory. It is admitted that Feisal-ed-Doweish acted unlawfully—a proclamation to that effect had, indeed, been issued by the Ulema of Nejd. He was deserving of, and would receive, punishment in due course. If Ibn Saud had delayed sending an expedition against him, it was because he feared that, as had happened in the past, raiders fleeing from punishment would be welcomed and harboured by Iraq. Resentment is also felt at reports appearing in the Iraq press to the effect that Feisal-ed-Doweish had revolted against Ibn Saud. When, the writer asks, has it ever been stated that Iraq raiders into Nejd, of whom there have been many, had revolted against King Feisal? This statement is regarded as an attempt on the part of Iraq to sow dissension between Ibn Saud and his people. The dropping of warnings in Nejd territory and the bombing of innocent and harmless people had caused those who had hitherto regarded Feisal-ed-Doweish's action with disgust to accept his point of view.

2. King Feisal's interview with Reuter's correspondent is commented upon at great length in the latest edition of the "Um-el-Qura." The King denied that the building of the Busaiyah post constituted a breach of the Uqair Protocol, first, because of its distance from the frontier, and, secondly, because it is not a military but a police post. The "Um-el-Qura" replies that there is accommodation for two officers and 140 soldiers. As regards the distance of the post from the frontier, no mention was made in the Uqair Protocol of distances. Busaiyah must have been understood to be one of the frontier wells as there are no others between Busaiyah and Ansab.

3. Ibn Saud has protested formally against the crossing of his frontiers by aeroplanes, against the dropping of proclamations in his territory and against the bombing of innocent persons. He states that such action is a breach of his sovereign independence and that he will have the greatest difficulty in restraining his subjects, who are smarting under this insult.

4. Whatever the internal condition of Nejd may be, and there is no indication that disturbances have occurred in the interior, the Hejaz appears so far to be entirely unaffected by events on the northern frontiers. The King has indeed called upon the Treasury to provide him with considerable funds, and a sum of £40,000 was recently transferred to Riyadh by car. The influx of pilgrims, however, makes it easily possible for the Hejaz to spare this sum. The pilgrimage is being well organised. The water supply at Mecca is now adequate. The number of pilgrims who have arrived to date is roughly 45,000, of whom 28,000 sailed from Dutch, 11,000 from Malayan and 3,600 from Indian ports. There has been a considerable shortage of camels, and pilgrims have been much inconvenienced thereby. Owing to the reduced fares consequent on the introduction of motor transport, fares by camel are so reduced that there is little or no profit and owners will not supply animals. There are at the present moment more than sufficient cars for the transport of all pilgrims, but certain pilgrims, especially the Javanese, consider that the value of their pilgrimage is lessened if they perform it otherwise than on camel back.

5. The regulation limiting the import of cars has aroused considerable resentment, and petitions on the subject have been addressed to the King. It is felt that the regulation operates unfairly in favour of the Saoudieh Company, who have already imported their full complement of cars. This company, though not subsidised, is yet generally regarded as a Government concern. It was started at the instigation of Ibn Saud, who wished to ensure for the pilgrims a reliable service of comfortable cars at reasonable rates. Influential merchants and officials were invited to provide the necessary capital. The policy of the company has not been beyond reproach; fares have been reduced to a commercially unsound rate in an endeavour to drive the small owners either to abandon the unequal struggle or to join forces with the "Saoudieh."

6. The new condenser, ordered in view of the shortage of water at Jeddah last year, has arrived, and is in process of erection. It is capable of a daily output of 150 tons, and, as it will be in working order in two months' time, pilgrims will have no cause of complaint during the present year's pilgrimage.

7. The mission to Sanaa, sent, it is understood, not to negotiate but to prepare the ground for future negotiations, has returned with a delegation of Yemenis. They await Ibn Saud's orders as to whether he will receive them at Riyadh or Mecca. It is generally believed that the Imam is well disposed and that there is hope of an agreement being reached shortly. It is rumoured that the Italians are losing ground in the Yemen, that the Imam is dissatisfied with the quality of the aeroplanes and arms supplied and is turning to the Germans.

8. Although no official account has appeared in the press, it is generally believed that the Emir Saud, Ibn Saud's eldest son, was recently proclaimed in Riyadh heir to the joint thrones of Nejd and the Hejaz. He is expected to pay a visit to Mecca in that capacity in the near future.

9. Mohammed Tawil Bey, ex-Director of Customs under King Hussein, has been arrested in Mecca and sent to Riyadh. The reason for his arrest is not known. He was known for his pro-Hashimite leanings, and had openly stated that he would accept no post under the present régime. He was not, however, believed to be taking any interest in politics. His activities were purely commercial; he had succeeded in forming a transport company, and was endeavouring to hold his own against the competition of the "Saoudieh." Some of his intimate friends, indeed, maintain that his arrest was engineered by his commercial rivals.

10. The Dutch bacteriologist, to whom reference has been made in previous reports, embraced Islam this month. He had hoped that permission to visit Mecca would be immediately forthcoming. Opposition by Syrian doctors in Mecca was, however, so strong that the Government have informed him that he must undergo a year's probation, after which time he will be allowed to reside in Mecca if he so wishes. As the King could not have been consulted, Dr. Van der Hoog has written through his consul to Riyadh, and has left the country, to return only if the King's answer is favourable.

11. Ibrahim Dupui, the acting French consul, has left Jeddah on sick leave. He was latterly quite unfit to perform his functions. He wearied his colleagues with highly coloured accounts of the condition of his entrails. After inducing the Italian consul to wire to his Government for the information of Paris that the state of his health was critical and that he must leave immediately, he delayed his departure many days after his leave was granted in the vain endeavour to marry the young daughter of a Jeddah notable. He already had one native lady with him on departure.

12. The British colony has been swelled by the arrival of a Mrs. Violet Cressy Marcks, armed with letters of introduction from Hafiz Wahba to the Emir Feisal and to the Kaimakam of Jeddah. She had no plans for her accommodation, and spoke vaguely of pitching a tent in the desert or living with a local family. As neither of these plans was practicable or in the interests of British prestige, a room was found for her at the Agency until a more suitable arrangement could be made. Mrs. Philby eventually agreed to take her. She has apparently travelled widely but without profit; her speciality is stunt trips, Cape to Cairo, &c. She has taken a short course in natural history. With no knowledge of Arabic or Arabia, she came prepared to set off across the desert. She has guns and scientific instruments of the use of which she seems quite ignorant. Mr. Philby hopes to employ her as an assistant in the skinning of birds and the impaling of insects. So long as Mrs. Marcks remains with the Philbys and confines her activities to such harmless pursuits her presence in the Hejaz is unobjectionable, but any attempt on her part to pitch a tent or to enter the interior will meet with strenuous opposition.

13. Four slaves were manumitted and repatriated during the month.

14. H.M.S. "Dahlia" paid a short visit to Jeddah, arriving on the 22nd February and leaving for Port Sudan on the 24th February. The French sloop "Bethune" also visited Jeddah on the 27th instant and remained two days.

[E 1349/1/91]

No. 34.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah).

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, March 19, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 7 of 26th February: Nejd-Iraq situation, penultimate paragraph.

While first three points of Ibn Saud's protest are matters for discussion between His Majesty and Sir G. Clayton, you may inform him at once that no post has been established at Mudawara.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 140, for repetition to Bagdad, Bahrein and Jerusalem.)

[E 1551/1/91]

No. 35.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 21.)

(No. 17.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, March 20, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 7.

Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that message was despatched by special courier who should arrive not later than 23rd March. He tells me that on first receiving news from Egypt of the possibility of Sir G. Clayton being sent out he had urged upon the King the advisability of immediately accepting our invitation to meet him, as therein lay the only possible solution of the present impasse. He hopes that a notification of the King's consent will reach us by 31st March.

(Repeated to Bagdad, Bushire, Jerusalem and Cairo, No. 26.)

[E 1499/80/91]

No. 36.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 21.)

(No. 18.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, March 20, 1928.

MY telegram No. 13.

Mission from Imam has arrived at Mecca and has been received by local authorities with unusual ceremony.

(Repeated to Cairo, Bagdad, Jerusalem and Bushire, No. 27.)

[E 1512/1362/91]

No. 37.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 21.)

(No. 19.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, March 20, 1928.

MY telegram No. 14.

Minister for Foreign Affairs admitted that Wejh incident was more serious than had at first been believed. Hamid-bin-Rifadha was opposing Ibn Saud's authority and had a certain backing of Belhi tribesmen; troops had been despatched, and suppression of Hamid was a question of days only.

I have reliable reports that a number of cars have been requisitioned at Medina by Government for transport to the north of troops and ammunition. It is not yet known whether their destination is El Ula or Kheibar. If the former, the force would be aimed at Rifadha; if the latter, colour would be lent to rumours of anti-Saud activity among tribesmen in Kheibar district round Hayat, El Huwayat and Kheibar.

(Repeated to Cairo, Bagdad, Jerusalem and Bushire, No. 28.)

[E 1554/1/91]

No. 38.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 185.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, March 23, 1928.

BAGDAD telegram No. 68 S. of 22nd March to Colonial Office.

Communication to Hafez Wahba was so worded as to refer only to suggested meeting of Sir G. Clayton with Ibn Saud "for a general discussion of all outstanding questions" (see your telegram No. 130). Nothing in communication, copy of which is being forwarded by next bag, would suggest acceptance of any of his proposals other than that for a conference between Ibn Saud and some British official, such as Sir G. Clayton, remote from the scene of conflict.

(Repeated to Bagdad.)

[E 1661/1362/91]

No. 39.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 28.)

(No. 20.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, March 28, 1928.

MY telegram No. 19.

Destination of cars is now known to have been Hanakiya, 60 miles north-east of Medina, where pasture land is reserved for Ibn Saud's camels. It is reported that tribesmen of the neighbourhood, unable to find pasturage for their camels, were trespassing on the Royal preserve. Resistance was offered by Ibn Saud's men, and in resulting struggle several of the latter were killed. Emir of Medina on receiving the news requisitioned eighteen cars and despatched men to the scene. Rumours of disturbances in Kheibar are not confirmed.

(Repeated to Cairo, Jerusalem, Bagdad and Bushire, No. 30.)

[E 1736/80/91]

No. 40.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 2.)

(No. 258.)

Sir,

Rome, March 29, 1928.

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your despatch No. 305 of the 10th instant, the counsellor to His Majesty's Embassy yesterday left with Signor Guariglia, Director-General of the Affairs of Europe and the Levant, a note explaining the impression produced upon Ibn Saud by his interpretation of the attitude of Italian local officials in Arabia and the suspicions he entertains as to the trend of Italian policy. This note further expressed the hope that the Italian Government would find it possible to reassure Ibn Saud with regard to this policy, whilst reminding them that any strengthening of the prestige and power of the Imam Yahia by Italy was calculated not only to alarm Ibn Saud, but also to render more difficult a solution of the problems involved in the relations of the Imam of Yemen with the Aden Protectorate. Mr. Wingfield also added some verbal explanations as to the unfortunate consequences which might be expected either from allowing Ibn Saud to believe that the Imam Yahia was receiving encouragement and arms from Italy, whilst he himself could expect no support from His Majesty's Government, with the result that he might be inclined to accept Bolshevik offers of assistance; or from any successful efforts by the Imam Yahia to alter to his advantage the existing situation in Asir, thus facing Ibn Saud with the alternatives of accepting the subversion of his position there or of making war to preserve it, either of which alternative would react in a most undesirable manner on Anglo-Italian relations.

2. Signor Guariglia replied that he would answer my note in writing, but that he could say at once that instructions would be sent to the effect that Ibn Saud should be reassured with regard to Italian policy. It was the latter's fault if no treaty had been concluded between him and Italy, as he had insisted on his suzerainty over Asir being specifically recognised, which was of course impossible, since the Imam Yahia would consider such recognition a most unfriendly act on the part of Italy. The Italian Government had, however, done all that was possible to restrain the Imam Yahia from taking any action against the Government of the Hejaz, and, so far as he,

Signor Guariglia, knew, there was no reason to believe that the Imam Yahia was endeavouring to interfere in the internal affairs of Asir.

3. Signor Guariglia said that he thought that Ibn Saud's allusions to bolshevism must be in the nature of a "bluff," but he was reminded of the visit to Jeddah of the Russian steamship "Tomp," and he was also shown passages in an article from the "Anbrosian" of the 22nd instant to the effect that the Mussulman world was being permanently kept in an exceedingly nervous state by Bolshevik propaganda, and that threats to the interests of any one European nation in the East constituted a danger to the interests of all Western civilisation.

4. In conclusion, Signor Guariglia said that there was one point which he would like to have mentioned to His Majesty's Government. He thought that there had been cases recently in which, probably without the British Government being fully aware of the facts, the bombing operations by British air forces in the territory of the Imam Yahia had been excessive in comparison with the exigencies of the situation. Mr. Wingfield enquired whether this suggestion meant that, after invasion of British territory, very strong measures had been found necessary to secure its evacuation, or whether it meant that bombing had taken place without any fresh incursions from the Imam's side; but Signor Guariglia was unwilling to enter into details. He protested that it was not for Italy to make suggestions, and that he only desired to point out quite generally that more had apparently been done than was really necessary in the circumstances.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

[E 1749/1/91]

No. 41.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 2.)

(No. 194.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, April 2, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 130.

Hafez Wahba points out that failure of conference between Ibn Saud and Sir Gilbert Clayton would result in a very dangerous situation.

He therefore urges that His Majesty's Government should examine sympathetically two principal demands of Ibn Saud, namely, the demolition of desert fortifications and mutual surrender of fugitive criminals, and make every effort to put Sir Gilbert Clayton in a position to give Ibn Saud satisfaction on these two points.

Hafez Wahba was told that we could not express any opinion on these two points.

I do not know how far His Majesty's Government are able to go on these two issues, but it would seem desirable anyhow that they should be very carefully considered before Sir Gilbert Clayton's departure and that consequences of failure of conference should be clearly envisaged.

If Clayton's mission eventuates, could he be asked to pass through Cairo on his way so that I could explain to him Hafez Wahba's point of view?

(Repeated to Bagdad, Bushire, Jeddah and Jerusalem.)

[E 1775/1/91]

No. 42.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 3.)

(No. 197.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, April 3, 1928.

HAFAZ WAHBA has received a telegram from Ibn Saud to the effect that latter has no objection to "operations being suspended whilst negotiations are in course," and that "question depends on demolition of forts and the two clauses connected therewith." Hafez Wahba is not sure what is meant by "the two clauses." Ibn Saud adds that details are following by post.

Ibn Saud's telegram was despatched before he could have received the invitation to meet Sir Gilbert Clayton.

(Repeated to Bagdad, Bushire, Jerusalem and Jeddah.)

[E 1821/1/91]

No. 43.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 7.)

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, April 6, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 10.

Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks that Court car bearing King's reply must have broken down, as it is many days overdue. He has sent out car in search.

I had requested Minister for Foreign Affairs to send at once to Riyadh copy of my letter to the King, but on receiving Bushire telegram No. 78 to Colonial Office, I informed him that this was no longer necessary.

[E 1825/1/91]

No. 44.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 7.)

(No. 205.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, April 7, 1928.

BAGDAD telegram No. 78 to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Hafez Wahba has been repeatedly told here that I have no information whatever, and can express no opinion regarding Ibn Saud's particular desiderata, which must be left for discussion with Sir G. Clayton (see, e.g., antepenultimate paragraph of my telegram No. 194 of 2nd April). That telegram shows that up to 2nd April Hafez Wahba himself was under no illusion and was still urging us to make concessions to Ibn Saud's demands. He therefore cannot be under the impression that any of his master's demands have been accepted as a preliminary to conference.

His letter of 17th March only expresses his satisfaction that His Majesty's Government have agreed to what he had urged so strongly, viz., a conference between Ibn Saud and Sir G. Clayton or any other delegate not from Mesopotamia or Persian Gulf. On the face of it, the phrase in Ibn Saud's letter, "he is grateful for His Majesty's Government considering his view-point," may be merely a courteous response to first sentence of His Majesty's Government's message (see your telegram No. 130).

However, if you think it advisable, I could make some intimation in writing to Hafez Wahba in any form you may wish to indicate, and confirming the fact that neither His Majesty's Government nor Mesopotamia have accepted any conditions whatsoever before the conference.

(Repeated to Bagdad, Bushire, Jerusalem and Jeddah.)

[E 1822/1/91]

No. 45.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah).

(No. 11.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 7, 1928.

BUSHIRE telegram No. 78 of 5th April.

You should inform Ibn Saud at once that His Majesty's Government are grateful for his message, and that Sir G. Clayton will proceed to Jeddah with least possible delay. It is improbable, however, that he can arrive much before the end of April. His Majesty will realise that date mentioned by him is rather early seeing that Sir G. Clayton has to come out from England, but every effort will be made to ensure his arrival at earliest possible moment.

Similar message is being sent through Bushire.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 157.)

[E 1961/1/91]

No. 46.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 12.)

(No. 27.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, April 12, 1928.

JERUSALEM telegram No. 42 and your telegram No. 11.

I have received letter from Ibn Saud dated 5th April stating that he is delighted at His Majesty's Government's choice of Sir G. Clayton, whom he hopes to meet at Jeddah at the beginning of Zil Qada.

He thanks His Majesty's Government for their sympathetic desire to arrive at a settlement of questions which are troubling both parties.

Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me King is now at Buriada, whither he had summoned chiefs for a conference. On receipt of His Majesty's Government's message offering to send out Sir G. Clayton, he had despatched his cousin Saud to Iqba to persuade chiefs to disband forces collected there, and to proceed to Buriada, where the King would meet them and explain his intention to clear up the situation by negotiation with His Majesty's Government.

Minister for Foreign Affairs is confident that risk of attack on Mesopotamia in force is now definitely removed.

After Buriada Conference, King will go to Hail and return thence to Jeddah via Medina.

Damruji assures me your message regarding date of Sir G. Clayton's arrival will reach the King before he has made plans to return, and that date will suit him admirably.

(Repeated to Bushire, Bagdad and Cairo.)

[E 1914/1/91]

No. 47.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 160.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 13, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 205 of 7th April: Sir G. Clayton's mission.

I do not think any further communication to Hafez Wahba is necessary.

[E 1999/484/91]

No. 48.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 16.)

(No. 41.)

Sir,

Jeddah, March 31, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith my report on the situation in the Hejaz for the period the 1st to the 31st March, 1928.

2. Copies of this report are being sent to Cairo, Jerusalem (2), Jerusalem for transmission to the Royal Air Force Officer Commanding in Palestine and Trans-jordan, Bagdad, Aden, Delhi, Beirut, Damascus, Khartum through Port Sudan, Singapore, Lagos (2).

3. A copy of paragraph 9 is being sent to His Majesty's consul-general at Batavia.

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

Enclosure in No. 48.

Jeddah Report for the period March 1 to 31, 1928.

The month under review, corresponding as it did with the fast of Ramadan, when days are spent in sleep and nights in gossip, saw the birth, both in the Hejaz and abroad, of wild rumours. The news appearing in the foreign press that Ibn Saud had proclaimed a holy war against the heretics of Iraq, Transjordan and Koweit was immediately denied. Local rumours of an even wilder nature were

current. Among the most fantastic were the news that Ibn Saud had lost control of all tribes in Nejd and was abdicating in favour of his brother Mohammed. This story was capped by news of the presence within 100 miles of Medina of a large invading army from Transjordan, complete with aeroplanes, the sound of whose engines had been clearly heard in the night. A hundred cars had been requisitioned and men and munitions rushed to the scene.

2. While Ramadan is largely to blame for the spreading of these rumours, authorities in Mecca must also bear their share of responsibility. It was not until inaccurate news of an incident at Wejh had been allowed to circulate for several days that the authorities in Mecca thought fit to offer an explanation, and then one containing only half-truths. The incident first came to the notice of the agency through the Khedivial agents, who reported that shots had been fired across the bows of the steamship "Mansourah," to warn her not to put in at Wejh. The Mecca Foreign Office reported that the question was one of no importance, that it was the result of a family quarrel and a misunderstanding between Hamid Rifada of the Belhi tribe and his cousin, the Amir of Wejh. The later, and as far as can be gathered, the true explanation, was that Hamid Rifada, who up till ten months ago had been living in Transjordan, had returned to the Hejaz. He had received a poor welcome and, unable to find means of subsistence, had taken to brigandage with a number of followers. He had finally attacked Wejh, and, though driven out of the town, had occupied certain of the wells on the outskirts. His action seems to have encouraged other turbulent spirits. A force was eventually despatched under Ibn Aqil, ex-Amir of Jauf, and, according to official information, the disturbance has been completely quelled.

3. News of the requisitioning of cars was confirmed, though the number was only eighteen. It was thought at first that this despatch of troops was connected with the Wejh incident, or, possibly, that rumours of trouble in the Kheibar district were well founded. It is now reported on good authority that the destination of the cars was Khanakiya (about 60 miles north-east of Medina), where the grazing ground is set apart for the King's camels. It appears that the tribesmen of the district, unable owing to the absence of rain to find pasturage for their animals, trespassed on the Royal preserve. A fight ensued, which resulted in the killing of a number of Ibn Saud's men. The Emir of Medina requisitioned cars, and hurried men to the scene to punish the aggressors.

4. Little is known in the Hejaz of the real state of affairs in Nejd. The reported arrival at Mecca of members of the King's household is taken by some to indicate that Ibn Saud is leaving Riyadh, by others to show that in view of the uncertain conditions in Nejd Ibn Saud is evacuating his family to the Hejaz. The Hejazi will not take any real interest in events in Nejd unless and until they seem likely to affect the Hejaz, and, in spite of the isolated incidents at Wejh and Khanakiya, it is still confidently believed that the situation in the Hejaz will remain unaffected. It is doubtful, moreover, how far Ibn Saud keeps his adviser fully informed either of events or of his policy. It is difficult otherwise to explain why when Hafiz Wahba was pronouncing his view in Cairo that the situation was most critical, the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Mecca should be telling this agency that news gave no cause for alarm. Dr. Damluji, indeed, was until recently apparently in complete ignorance that Hafiz Wahba's stay in Cairo related to anything more personal than his recent marriage. Whether Hafiz Wahba is correct in his view that the tribes either are or will become completely uncontrollable, or whether Damluji's view that at no time has the King lost control of any tribe is accurate, they are both agreed, and their opinion is generally shared, that in a meeting between Ibn Saud and an Imperial British delegate lies the only solution of the present *impasse*.

5. During the past month the Mecca press has shed no new lights on the situation. Leading articles in the first issues were devoted to recapitulating the points of transgression of various agreements by Iraq and Transjordan, insistence on the oft-repeated accusation of the harbouring by those countries of fugitive criminals and assurances that the King had only refrained from taking drastic action against the raiders lest they should take refuge in Iraq. In the last issue the transgressions of Iraq and Transjordan are passed over more lightly; the King's regret at the action of the raiders is insisted on and sorrow is expressed at the action of the press abroad in publishing false news of events and in misinterpreting the King's policy.

6. Mohammed Tawil Bey, to whose arrest reference was made in paragraph 9

of the Jeddah report for February, has, it is reported, succeeded, chiefly owing to strong support by the Assistant Viceroy, in instating himself in Ibn Saud's favour. He has informed his family that he will be leaving Riyadh with the King shortly after the 14th. If this news is correct, he will probably be placed in charge of one of the Government services, possibly as Director of Customs, a post which he held with distinction under King Hussein.

7. The mission from the Imam Yahya to Ibn Saud mentioned in paragraph 7 of the last Jeddah report has arrived in Mecca, accompanied by Ibn Saud's delegates, Mohammed-bin-Dalim, Sheikh of Quhtan, and Turki-el-Mahdi. The Imam's mission is composed of three principal delegates, Sayed Qasim-bin-Hussein, Sayed Mohammed-bin-Zebarah and Sayed Abbas-bin-Ahmad, five assistants and twenty-three retainers. The delegation was welcomed with great ceremony, and a banquet was given in their honour by the Emir Feisal. It is generally felt that the intentions of the Imam are pacific and friendly towards Ibn Saud, as he would otherwise not have let slip so favourable an opportunity as the present, when Ibn Saud is faced with difficulties in the north, of harassing him on his southern borders.

8. I understand that the King is anxious for Italian recognition, but that the Italians are inclined to let the question drag on until the present unsettled situation has been cleared up. There is ground for belief also that they are actuated in their policy of procrastination by the feeling that Italian recognition at this juncture, when Ibn Saud is not in full agreement with His Majesty's Government, might give the appearance of a somewhat tactless move.

9. A Dutch convert to Islam, G. Krugers (Abdul Wahid), arrived recently in Jeddah, hoping to be allowed to proceed immediately to Mecca. The Hejaz authorities are, however, adopting as an established rule the practice followed in the case of Dr. van der Hoog, namely, a year's probationary period must elapse before residence in, or even a visit to, Mecca is to be permitted. The Dutchman, a convert of only two months' standing, is armed with a letter of recommendation from the Sarikat-ul-Islam, of Java, bearing among other signatures that of Agoes Selim. The motives of his visit, and probably of his conversion, are commercial—he represents a cinematograph company and appears to take no interest in political questions.

10. Kerim Khakimoff, the Soviet representative, is worried and depressed. He was sent back to Jeddah at short notice in view of the serious set-back to Soviet interests resulting from the Government's action in the matter of the "Tomp." He sees little hope of recovering lost ground. He must, moreover, be worried at the small return obtained by the U.S.S.R. for the great cost of upkeep of the Soviet Agency in Jeddah. There are now, including Khakimoff and the doctor, six members on the staff of the agency and nine servants. There are those in Jeddah who see in Feisal-ed-Doweish's antagonism to Iraq signs of Bolshevik influence, but if any Soviet agents had found their way to his headquarters the fact could not fail to have become known. Moreover, communistic doctrines are as little likely to find favour with Feisal-ed-Doweish as with Ibn Saud, to whose religious beliefs and feudal form of government they are equally abhorrent. Few Russian pilgrims are expected, though it is believed that one ship at least will sail from Odessa. The agency at Jeddah of the Russian steamship line, held till now by Messrs. Gellatly Hankey, has been offered to Messrs. Lazzerini, the agents of Italian lines calling at Jeddah. After some hesitation, the Italian consul, on being consulted, advised Messrs. Lazzerini to accept. He felt, and I agreed, that it was better, if the agency is to pass from Gellatly Hankey, that it should be in the hands of Europeans who could keep us informed, rather than in that of a native over whom no control could be exercised.

11. The number of pilgrims landed at Jeddah to date is roughly 55,000, as compared with 58,580 on the same date last year. There is thus, so far, little falling-off in numbers, though much depends on the number of Egyptian and North African pilgrims, who are still an unknown quantity. There is, moreover, no indication of the number of Indians to be expected. They, as a rule, unlike the Javanese and Malays, prefer to leave for the pilgrimage after Ramadan. There is no news of further ships from the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya and, if no more arrive, the total of Malay and Javanese pilgrims combined will fall short of last year's total by some 12,000.

12. Her Highness the Raja Permaisuri of Perak, who is performing the pilgrimage this year, arrived in Jeddah on the 21st March and proceeded to Mecca three days later. Her Highness, and the ladies accompanying her, honoured the agency by accepting an invitation to tea.

13. Another distinguished pilgrim now in the Hejaz is the Begum of Junagadh. The Hejaz Government have been requested to afford all possible facilities to enable the ladies to perform the pilgrimage with the minimum of discomfort.

14. The Turkish representative now in charge of Afghan interests has been obliged to reduce the registration tax levied on Afghans from 14 rupees to 6 rupees. Even so, there is much discontent, and Afghans who, while their agency was in charge of their interests, paid no fees either for registration or visa, are refusing to present themselves at the Turkish consulate. Ghulam Mohammed Khan, ex-Minister of Commerce, while on the Haj last year, protested against the levying of visa fees, and stated that he would ensure the appointment of an Afghan pilgrimage officer this year. His efforts do not appear to have met with any success. To the French consulate, already in charge of Belgian and Greek interests, have been entrusted Siamese interests.

15. Munshi Ihsanullah, the Indian pilgrimage officer attached to this agency, has been appointed His Majesty's Indian vice-consul as from the 13th February last.

16. Two slaves have been manumitted and repatriated during the month of March.

[E 1998/80/91]

No. 49.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 16.)

(No. 302.)

Sir,

Rome, April 13, 1928.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 258 of the 29th ultimo, on the subject of Ibn Saud's apprehensions regarding Italy's attitude towards the Imam of Yemen, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a translation of a reply which I received yesterday from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the note handed by Mr. Wingfield to Signor Guariglia on the 28th March.

I have, &c.
R. GRAHAM.

Enclosure in No. 49.

Aide-mémoire from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

(Translation.)

IN reply to *aide-mémoire* of the 27th March last, the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs have the honour to bring the following to the notice of His Britannic Majesty's Embassy:—

1. No secret agreement exists between Italy and the Yemen.
2. It is correct that the Royal Government have made the recognition of Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz contingent upon assurances of peaceful intentions on the part of the latter with regard to his relations with the Imam Yahia, and on the exclusion of such recognition in respect of Asir, as they consider that this question should be left in abeyance for the present.

The attitude adopted by the Royal Government is in complete agreement with the understandings arrived at with His Britannic Majesty's Government on the subject of the policy to be pursued in Arabia and with regard to Asir, concerning which the Royal Government has requested His Britannic Majesty's Government not to make any decision which might give rise to reactions on the part of the Imam.

3. The reports contained in the letter handed by Sheikh Hafiz Wahba to the British High Commissioner in Egypt, to the effect that the present state of mind of Ibn Saud might be seized upon as a propitious moment for the furtherance of the designs—hitherto opposed by Ibn Saud—of Bolshevik agents upon the Hejaz, would appear to be a means of pressure rather than anything else.

4. The Royal Government has furnished proofs of its complete goodwill as regards the recognition of Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz, and regrets most sincerely that the negotiations did not reach a conclusion through the fault of Ibn Saud himself, who, while not accepting the suggestions of the Royal Government, has also given little proof of goodwill on his part as regards the improvement of his relations with his neighbours. The attitude of the Royal Government towards Ibn Saud has always been

friendly, as he has repeatedly recognised by asking for closer relations between Italy and the Hejaz. It might be expedient to mention, *à propos* of this, that it was largely due to the intervention of Italy with the Imam Yahia that the latter stopped his troops on the line of Medi when the occupation of Asir would not have been very difficult for him. Equally so, it is due to Italian intervention that a mission from the Imam is at this moment in Mecca with the object of continuing peaceful negotiations to solve the problems existing between the two Sovereigns—including that of Asir.

5. The Royal Government would have no difficulty in reopening the negotiations with Ibn Saud for his recognition as King of the Hejaz subject to the conditions laid down in paragraph 2.

6. Italian actions in the Yemen have always been actuated by the friendly spirit which pervaded the Italo-British conversations at Rome, and the fact that the Imam abstained from any rash act after the bombardment of Dala and Kataba was due also to the counsel of moderation given by the Italian Government. This might provide an opportunity for the reopening of pacific negotiations between Great Britain and the Imam regarding the question of the frontiers between the Yemen and the protectorate of Aden.

7. Italian action, which is also to the advantage of British interests, cannot, however, have any other preconception than the maintenance of good relations between Italy and the Yemen. Therefore it seems evidently opportune, in accordance with the Rome understanding, to proceed with the utmost caution in dealing with this delicate question.

[E 2068/2068/91]

No. 50.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 20.)

Sir,

Downing Street, April 19, 1928.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to transmit to you, for the information of Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain, copies of two letters to Sir Gilbert Clayton on the subject of the forthcoming British mission to Ibn Saud.

I am, &c.
S. H. WILSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 50.

Colonial Office to Sir Gilbert Clayton.

Sir,

Downing Street, April 17, 1928.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th April notifying your acceptance of the appointment of special British representative for the purpose of negotiating a settlement of outstanding questions with His Majesty King Ibn Saud. It is not the desire of His Majesty's Government to limit your discretion in regard to the manner in which the results desired by His Majesty's Government should be attained, but for your guidance, and in order to assist you in the negotiations, it is thought desirable to communicate to you the following information regarding the circumstances which have necessitated your mission and to state the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to the matters which will form the subject of your conversations with His Majesty King Ibn Saud.

2. The primary object of your mission will be to discuss the present critical situation between Iraq and Nejd, which has arisen as a result of a series of raids into Iraq and Koweit territory by certain Akhwan elements, and to attempt in conversation with His Majesty to liquidate this situation in such a manner as will prevent further raids of this nature upon territories with which His Majesty's Government are in treaty relations. To assist you in this part of your mission, it is proposed that Mr. K. Cornwallis, C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O., the adviser to the Ministry of Interior, Iraq, should accompany you. He will be fully acquainted with the details of these raids, the casualties inflicted, the loss of live-stock and property occasioned, and the claims for reparation therefor to be presented by the Iraq Government. He will also be in a position to advise you in regard to the tribal situation on the Iraq-Nejd frontier. It is also proposed that Mr. B. H. Bourdillon,

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C.M.G., the counsellor to the High Commissioner for Iraq, should fly to Egypt to consult with you in regard to the conduct of this part of your mission.

3. For your information in regard to this aspect of your mission, I am to enclose a copy of a memorandum* prepared in the Foreign Office summarising the correspondence which has passed between His Majesty King Ibn Saud and the various representatives of His Majesty's Government concerned. I am also to enclose copies of statements* furnished by the High Commissioner for Iraq containing a summary of the communications received by him from King Ibn Saud and showing in a parallel column the action taken thereon and the replies to the complaints made in His Majesty's letters.* A more complete set of correspondence with King Ibn Saud, as affecting Iraq and Transjordan, will doubtless be communicated to you by those Governments and, in so far as it has passed through Jeddah, by the British agent and consul at that port. Although these documents set out in full the circumstances leading up to the present situation, it might be of advantage to furnish you with a brief account of the principal events which have led to the present crisis in the relations between His Majesty's Government and the King of Nejd.

4. In September of last year King Ibn Saud addressed to the High Commissioner for Iraq a protest against the establishment by the Iraq Government of certain advanced police posts. The post to which His Majesty took principal exception was one at Busaiyah, then in course of construction, which provided accommodation for some fifteen police. The post was situated at a distance of some 75 miles from the nearest point on the Iraq-Nejd frontier. In his letter, His Majesty represented that the construction of this post was contrary to the provisions of article 3 of the Uqair Protocol of the 2nd December, 1922, which reads as follows:—

"The two Governments mutually agree not to use the watering places and wells situated in the vicinity of the border for any military purpose, such as building forts on them, and not to concentrate troops in their vicinity."

Some three weeks later King Ibn Saud followed up this letter with a further protest. At this point it should be explained that the construction of the Busaiyah post and similar police posts at other places equally far distant from the frontier was undertaken by the Iraq Government in response to a previous complaint by King Ibn Saud that the Iraq Government were permitting the refugee Shammar tribe to raid into Nejd territory through the narrow corridor connecting Iraq and Transjordan. The Iraq Government hoped by the establishment of these advanced police posts to obtain early information of such raids, and thus, even if unable to prevent them occurring, at least to intercept the raiders on their return and inflict salutary punishment.

5. In the latter part of October the High Commissioner replied to King Ibn Saud, pointing out that there was no foundation for the charge that the establishment of the Busaiyah post was a contravention of the Uqair Protocol, and sending photographs and details of the post to demonstrate that, quite apart from the fact that it could not be described as "in the vicinity of the border" (it is, in fact, the same distance from the Nejd frontier as the fortified post at Rutbah, on the trans-desert air and motor route), its small size and limited garrison rendered any description of it as "a fort" misleading. On the 5th November, while this correspondence was in progress, a party of Mutair raided the Busaiyah post and slaughtered its occupants, including, in addition to the garrison of six police, an irrigation official, twelve coolies and an Iraqi woman. After this raid there followed in quick succession a number of further raids by Mutair tribesmen upon Iraq tribes. These raids were characterised by the utmost savagery. Strongly-worded protests were sent to King Ibn Saud, but these produced equivocal replies, which, while admitting that in carrying out these raids the leader of the Mutair, Sheikh Feisal-al-Dawish, had acted in defiance of His Majesty's instructions, represented that the fault really lay with the Iraq Government in constructing the police post, and that if the police post were abandoned the raids would cease. It became increasingly obvious that the Mutair tribe had definitely thrown off King Ibn Saud's authority and were no longer under his effective control; and this view was apparently substantiated by a warning which His Majesty conveyed to the Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the effect that a large force of Akhwan were marching north contrary to his orders. In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government decided that there could no longer be any objection to the Royal Air Force in Iraq being

* Not printed.

authorised to pursue Akhwan raiders across the border in order to inflict, if possible, a lasting lesson on them. This decision was communicated to King Ibn Saud.

6. In the meantime these constant Akhwan raids had had the effect of seriously unsettling the Iraq tribe of Anizeh, one of the most powerful tribal confederations in Iraq. Towards the end of December the High Commissioner reported that, unless effective measures were taken to prevent further raids and to restore the confidence of this tribe, there was a serious danger that they would desert Iraq and join the Akhwan. He explained that, owing to the immense stretch of frontier and the great distance involved, it was almost impossible for British aircraft to catch the raiders red-handed and to inflict punishment upon them within Iraq territory, and he suggested that, unless within a specified period King Ibn Saud demonstrated his willingness and ability to punish the raiders, a blockade of the Hasa ports should be imposed in order to bring pressure to bear on the Akhwan. His Majesty's Government were, however, unwilling to adopt so serious a step, in any case, until more direct action against the guilty tribesmen had been tried and proved unsuccessful. After full consideration, they decided that, in the first instance, it would be preferable to extend air action beyond the Iraq frontier in order to deny an area of grazing grounds to the Akhwan. Early in January, and after the lapse of some two months since the initial raid had taken place, during which further raids had occurred and King Ibn Saud had taken no effective measures to restrain his recalcitrant subjects, the authority for the adoption of this measure was given, and King Ibn Saud was notified accordingly. Advance aircraft and armoured-car bases were pushed forward to the vicinity of the frontier, and notices were dropped warning tribes to move out of the area which was to be denied to the Akhwan. This action, coupled with constant air reconnaissances, was sufficient to restore the confidence of the Iraqi tribes, and for some three weeks the raiding activities on the part of the Mutair were suspended. At the end of January, however, further raids occurred, culminating in a raid upon Iraq and Kuwait tribesmen by some 2,000 of the Akhwan, who penetrated to a depth of some 65 miles. The raiders were attacked by British aircraft and are understood to have suffered severe losses.

7. King Ibn Saud had hitherto endeavoured to exculpate himself and his tribes by the allegation that the Iraq Government had broken their treaty pledges and thus to excuse his failure to prevent the raids and to administer punishment. He now represented that the crossing of his frontier by British aeroplanes was a violation of his territory. These aeroplanes, he alleged, by bombing guilty and innocent alike, had so outraged the feelings of his people that he had had to abandon measures which he had already set in motion for the control and punishment of the Mutair, his work of pacification had been destroyed and he could no longer control the feelings of his people. A complete answer to this allegation, that innocent persons have been attacked by British aircraft, will be found in a telegram from Sir H. Dobbs, dated the 19th March, of which a copy is attached.*

8. In response to this message, His Majesty's Government replied that in order to assist him to regain control and provided that His Majesty would give assurances that he would prevent further raids and would punish the offenders and exact full reparation, orders would be issued that no aircraft should cross the Nejd frontier except in hot pursuit of raiders. At the same time, His Majesty's Government repeated a suggestion previously made by them on several occasions that a meeting should be arranged between His Majesty and the British Resident in the Persian Gulf to discuss the questions in dispute. His Majesty did not accept this invitation nor did he give the assurances for which His Majesty's Government had asked, but merely reiterated his previous protests. Meanwhile, rumours became current that all the Akhwan were joining with the Mutair in a regular "jihad" (Holy War) against the non-Akhwan States of Iraq, Transjordan and Kuwait, and that King Ibn Saud (himself powerless to prevent it) had been forced to associate himself with this movement. Later information, however, tends to discredit these rumours, and to indicate that King Ibn Saud dissociates himself from the action of the more unruly elements of the Akhwan, and has been, at least temporarily, successful in detaching the important tribe of Ataihi from the movement against Iraq and Kuwait. According to earlier rumours, this tribe, together with the Ajman, had decided to join with the Mutair in attacking Iraq, Transjordan and Kuwait.

9. Throughout his letters King Ibn Saud has maintained, in the face of uncontrovertible evidence to the contrary, that the establishment of the Busaiyah

* Not printed.

post and similar police posts is a contravention of the Uqair Protocol, and has continued to press for its abolition as providing the only solution of the present trouble. To this His Majesty has lately added a further condition, namely, that those responsible for bombing his territory should be punished. As an example of the general tenor of King Ibn Saud's recent letters, I am to enclose a translation of a letter from His Majesty dated the 8th March.* The comments of the High Commissioner for Iraq upon this letter will be found in his telegram No. 168 of the 19th March, to which reference has been made in paragraph 7 above.

10. His Majesty's Government are not prepared to admit that the Iraq Government, in constructing these posts, acted otherwise than in full accord with their treaty obligations; nor are they prepared to agree to the demolition of any of these posts. It should be realised that the interest of His Majesty's Government in the maintenance of these posts does not arise solely out of their responsibility for the defence of Iraq. It is of the utmost importance for His Majesty's Government to ensure the preservation of the authority of the Iraq Government in the corridor connecting Iraq and Transjordan. If Akhwan influence were allowed to penetrate into this area, the projects of a pipe-line and a railway from Haifa to Bagdad, to which His Majesty's Government attach considerable importance, would become impracticable. The only apparent means of securing the maintenance of Iraq authority in this area is by a chain of posts such as those which have been established by the Iraq Government, and to which King Ibn Saud takes such a strong exception. You will see, therefore, that imperial as well as local issues are involved. Consequently, a solution on the lines proposed by King Ibn Saud is unacceptable, and it remains to consider what other measures can be taken in order to provide a satisfactory settlement of the matters in dispute, and one which will offer good prospects of the cessation of further raiding and the establishment of settled conditions on the Iraq-Nejd frontier.

Doubtless a full and frank discussion of the questions in dispute between yourself and King Ibn Saud will go far to convince His Majesty (if, indeed, he is not already convinced) that his protests against the establishment of the Busaiyah post were unjustified and that in this matter the action of the Iraq Government has been correct, but, if any settlement which may be reached is to be lasting, the question of King Ibn Saud's own position *vis-à-vis* his tribes cannot be ignored. No settlement can be considered satisfactory which involves any serious and apparent loss of prestige on his part and therefore tends to weaken his control over his subjects. In short, some arrangement should be arrived at which, without involving any admission of fault on the part of the Iraq Government or of His Majesty's Government, will serve to mitigate His Majesty's difficulties.

11. The dispute, ostensibly at least, has arisen owing to a difference of interpretation of the words "in the vicinity of the border" in article 3 of the Uqair Protocol. In the interests of both parties it is essential that some means should be found of removing the ambiguity in this phrase, and thus eliminating the possibility of further dispute by the adoption of an accepted definition. It has been suggested that these words should be defined as meaning within a distance of, say, 25 miles from the frontier. Alternatively, it has been suggested that, instead of a definition based upon distance from the frontier, the wells on each side of the frontier, the fortification of which is prohibited, should be specifically enumerated. The Iraq Government have agreed in principle to the latter suggestion, but consider that difficulties may arise owing to the lack of exhaustive information on the subject. Mr. Cornwallis will, however, be furnished with a map showing the position of such wells as are known to exist. His Majesty's Government consider that a definition on the basis of one or other of the above alternatives should, if possible, be adopted, but they are content to leave you to decide, in the light of your conversations with King Ibn Saud and in consultation with Mr. Cornwallis, the precise terms of the definition to be adopted.

12. In a letter dated the 25th January and addressed to His Majesty's agent and consul at Jeddah, King Ibn Saud stated that, in deference to the stipulations of article 3 of the Uqair Protocol he had forbidden his tribes to build a fortified post at Linah, which is situated more than 30 miles from the Iraq frontier. It seems possible that, by encouraging His Majesty to exercise his undoubted right to construct a chain of Nejd posts outside the prohibited zone on his side of the frontier, the reciprocal nature of the arrangement would be made evident and any appearance of surrender on the part of His Majesty would be removed. With the

* Not printed.

same object in view, the Iraq Government have suggested that His Majesty might be encouraged to co-operate with them in the establishment of a joint post to be manned by Nejd and Iraqi contingents in the neutral zone. You will doubtless put forward these suggestions, if you consider them likely to be acceptable to King Ibn Saud, when a favourable opportunity occurs.

In the unlikely event of King Ibn Saud proving wholly intractable and your failing to move him by argument, you may, if you see fit, indicate to him in such manner as you may deem appropriate that, unless some satisfactory settlement is reached which will ensure peaceful conditions on the frontiers of Iraq and Koweit, His Majesty's Government may be compelled to bring further pressure to bear upon the guilty tribes either directly or indirectly through the medium of a blockade of the Persian Gulf Ports. In this connexion I am to enclose copies of telegrams from which it appears that King Ibn Saud is fully alive to the latter possibility and is anxious to avoid it.*

If it becomes evident that there can be no satisfactory outcome from your conversations with His Majesty and that their continuance would serve no useful purpose, you should report accordingly to His Majesty's Government and await instructions, in the meantime suspending discussions. It is not the wish of His Majesty's Government that the negotiations should be definitely broken off while there remains any prospect of a successful issue or without prior reference to London.

13. Mr. Cornwallis will be in a position to furnish you with details of the claims of the Iraq Government to reparation for the recent Akhwan raids. You should endeavour to obtain from King Ibn Saud an undertaking to satisfy these claims after due investigation and indeed any settlement with His Majesty which does not contain provision for the liquidation of these claims, and for the punishment of his guilty tribesmen would not be acceptable.

14. In a letter, a copy of which is enclosed,† dated the 6th December addressed to His Majesty's High Commissioner for Egypt and presented by Sheikh Hafez Wahba, His Majesty suggested that a special emissary should visit him to discuss certain matters of mutual concern to himself and the British Government. As you will see, the three questions in his opinion calling for discussion were—

- (1.) Italy's new position in Arabia;
- (2.) The position of the Shereefian rulers of Iraq and Transjordan; and
- (3.) The position of Bolsheviks in Arabia and their conflict with British economic interests.

Of these questions the second, which really concerns the traditional hostility between King Ibn Saud and the present rulers of Iraq and Transjordan, will doubtless be raised by King Ibn Saud in the course of your discussions regarding the situation on the Iraq-Nejd frontier. It is hoped that, with the information with which Mr. Cornwallis will be able to furnish you, supplemented by the facts which will be supplied to you by the Transjordan Government, you will be in a position to reassure His Majesty that, whatever may be the personal feelings towards himself of King Feisal and his brother the Amir Abdullah, such feelings are not allowed to affect in any degree the policy or actions of the Governments of those two countries *vis-à-vis* his own territories.

15. With regard to the first of the questions mentioned above, I am to enclose for your information and guidance a copy of a despatch addressed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to His Majesty's Ambassador in Rome.‡ Unless King Ibn Saud himself raises the question of the position of Italy in the south-west portion of Arabia you should not advert to the subject. If, however, the question is raised by His Majesty, in the course of your discussions, you should inform him that His Majesty's Government are giving their sympathetic attention to the views which he has expressed and are considering the best means of allaying his anxieties.

16. As regards the third question mentioned in King Ibn Saud's letter, I leave it to your discretion, if a suitable opportunity presents itself, to point out to His Majesty the ill effects upon the pilgrimage and consequently upon the Hejaz Exchequer if the Bolshevik activities in the Hejaz are permitted to increase. You may assure His Majesty that if he will take the matter in hand His Majesty's Government will be glad to co-operate with him by giving him all the information that may reach them as to the presence of known Bolshevik agents or persons of pronounced Bolshevik views proceeding to the Hejaz under the guise of pilgrims.

* Not printed.

† See Enclosure in No. 5.

‡ No. 25.

17. As you are aware certain points raised by King Ibn Saud in the course of the conversations, which you conducted with him in the summer of 1927 in connexion with the negotiation of the Treaty of Jeddah were left over for subsequent settlement, and it is desirable that you should know what action has been taken in regard to these matters by His Majesty's Government in the interval.

In paragraph 22 of your despatch of the 6th June, 1927, you reported to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that King Ibn Saud had raised the question of the restoration of the Hejaz Railway. You then informed him that His Majesty's Government were discussing the matter with the French Government; His Majesty asked to be kept informed of the progress of the negotiations and said that he presumed that he would be given the opportunity of nominating a representative to attend the conference, which would be held with a view to arranging a final settlement.

In June last the French Government suggested that a conference of local experts should be held at Haifa, but that the activities of the conference should be limited to the discussion of technical questions. In August, His Majesty's Government informed the French Government that they agreed to their suggestions, and expressed the hope that they would join with His Majesty's Government in informing King Ibn Saud accordingly, and requesting him to nominate a representative to attend the conference at Haifa. Though their attention was on several occasions called to the matter, the French Government did not signify their acceptance of the proposals made by His Majesty's Government until the 23rd December last. On the 29th December the British consul, at Jeddah, was instructed to concert with his French colleague in informing King Ibn Saud that His Majesty's Government and the French Government proposed that a conference of local experts from Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and the Hejaz should be held at Haifa to consider questions relating to the restoration of the Hejaz section of the railway. The Hejaz Government have accepted this proposal, but, at their request, the conference has been postponed until the first days of July.

18. As regards the question of capitulations, which was also under discussion in connexion with the negotiations of the Treaty of Jeddah, the attitude of His Majesty's Government remains that they no longer claim capitulatory rights in King Ibn Saud's territory, but do not intend to make any formal statement to that effect. A copy of a despatch addressed to His Majesty's acting consul at Jeddah on this subject is enclosed.*

19. A copy is also enclosed of a despatch to His Majesty's acting-consul at Jeddah on the subject of the Haramain Wakfs.† You will see that His Majesty's Government cannot give any general promise of assistance to King Ibn Saud in the matter of Haramain Wakfs, but that, subject to this reservation, they will, in this matter as in others, always be ready to consider sympathetically any request which he may make for assistance or advice. For the reasons given in the despatch addressed to Mr. Jakins, His Majesty's Government are unable to comply with the specific requests made by King Ibn Saud to you.

20. In your despatch of the 9th June to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs you reported that King Ibn Saud entered into detail in regard to the particular case of the tribunals for the settlement of claims on account of raids, with special reference to Transjordan, and that His Majesty had said that, as regards past raids, he would be willing to accept the award of an arbiter, provided that a selected British officer was appointed. His Majesty also suggested, to facilitate speedy settlement in the future, the appointment of a British officer, experienced in Arab habits and customs, whose duty it would be to keep a constant watch over tribal affairs, and who would be the recipient of all details and information regarding raids as and when they took place.

21. In September last His Majesty was informed that His Majesty's Government accepted his proposal for the appointment of a British officer to keep constant watch over tribal affairs on the Nejd-Transjordan frontier, and that they proposed that this officer should act as arbitrator in disputes arising from past raids. His Majesty's Government proposed to entrust these duties to Mr. A. S. Kirkbride, the first assistant to the British Resident in Transjordan. King Ibn Saud agreed to accept the findings of a British arbitrator, but he made it clear that he would not agree to the appointment of any person connected with the Governments of Palestine, Transjordan or Iraq, either as an arbitrator on claims arising out of past raids or as the recipient of details and information regarding future raids. After further

* Part XXI, No. 22.

† Not printed.

consideration His Majesty's Government decided in December last (1) to inform King Ibn Saud that, if he agreed that one half the cost of the appointment would be borne by the Government of Nejd, they would forthwith appoint as arbitrator on claims arising out of past raids an officer unconnected with the Governments of Palestine, Transjordan or Iraq, and (2) to suggest to His Majesty that he should discuss with the officer so appointed the best means of providing machinery for the settlement of any future disputes. As His Majesty was then on the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf and as it seemed desirable that the matter should be discussed with him orally it was decided to defer further negotiations until he returned to Jeddah.

22. His Majesty has now reopened the question. You should inform him that His Majesty's Government are prepared to appoint a British officer to arbitrate upon claims arising out of past raids between Transjordan and Nejd, and that they undertake to select for this appointment an officer who has no connexion with the administrations of Palestine, Transjordan or Iraq. You should also inform His Majesty that in the view of His Majesty's Government this officer should adjudicate upon claims in respect of raids as far back as the date of the occupation of Jauf by King Ibn Saud's forces in July 1921, and that all claims, whether made by Transjordan against Nejd or by Nejd against Transjordan, should be dealt with by him. If King Ibn Saud agrees to these proposals, His Majesty's Government will appoint an officer to arbitrate upon the claims as soon as possible.

23. As regards the proposal that an officer should be appointed to deal with future disputes, there are practical difficulties in adopting this suggestion, since that officer would owe allegiance to no local authority and could have no very clear or definite status. A further consideration is that it is most unlikely that the duties of receiving information about, and dealing with, tribal questions on the Nejd-Transjordan frontier would occupy the full time and services of an officer. You should therefore explain to King Ibn Saud the difficulties which lie in the way of the appointment of a whole-time officer for this purpose.

24. Failing the use of the tribunals provided for in the Hadda Agreement, the alternatives appear to be (1) the appointment of a special arbitrator as and when need arises, or (2) the appointment by the Governments of Transjordan and Nejd of frontier officers from both sides, who would meet from time to time and deal on the spot with such difficulties as may arise on the frontier. If the latter alternative were adopted, it might be desirable, having regard to the possibility of a complete deadlock between the two frontier officers, to provide that, failing settlement by them, any matter in dispute should be referred to a British officer unconnected with any of the local administrations. His Majesty's Government are content to leave it to you to decide (1) how far, if at all, King Ibn Saud should be pressed to agree that future disputes and claims should be brought before the tribunals provided for in the Hadda Agreement, and (2) failing agreement on this point, which of the alternative arrangements mentioned above should be adopted.

25. I am to inform you that, in accordance with your suggestion, the Palestine Government have agreed to place at your disposal the services of Mr. G. Antonius, C.B.E., both to assist you generally in the negotiations and to advise in regard to all matters connected with Transjordan. He will be fully documented in regard to recent raids and claims for reparation, and will be fully acquainted with tribal questions and the situation on the Transjordan frontier. He will join your mission in Egypt.

His Majesty's Government think it desirable that an officer of the Royal Air Force should be attached to your mission, and they have selected Flight-Lieutenant G. M. Moore, M.C., for this purpose.

This officer, in addition to advising you on technical questions affecting his service, will be available to inspect King Ibn Saud's aerodromes, should His Majesty desire, and to advise him on any points relating to the Hejaz air service in regard to which His Majesty may be in doubt.

I am, &c.

J. E. SHUCKBURGH.

Enclosure 2 in No. 50.

Colonial Office to Sir G. Clayton.

Sir,

Downing Street, April 17, 1928.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to refer to the letter from this Department of the 17th April, conveying to you the instructions of His Majesty's Government in regard to your proposed mission to negotiate a settlement of outstanding questions with His Majesty King Ibn Saud. I am to explain that there are two further points which may be raised in the course of your conversations with Ibn Saud, and which, as being of a subsidiary character, were not included in your official instructions.

2. The first of these points relates to a recent attack upon sections of the Beni Sakhr tribes within King Ibn Saud's territory. In February last the High Commissioner for Transjordan reported that a large force of Wahabis, led by Farhan Ibn Mashour, attacked certain sections of the Beni Sakhr tribes while they were on grazing grounds in Nejd territory, north-east of Jauf. The sheikh of the Zeni section and his son, with about 100 other tribesmen, were killed, the survivors being carried off to Jauf.

This report was forwarded to His Majesty King Ibn Saud with a request that he would enquire into the circumstances and effectively punish the guilty parties. His Majesty has replied that the outrage was committed not by Akhwan but by a party of the Rawala who emigrated from Syria two years ago; that his Amir at Jabal has arrested the criminals, who will be punished; that certain of the Beni Sakhr who suffered have arrived at Jauf, and that the Amir at Hail is enquiring into the matter and will recover the stolen property.

You should inform His Majesty that His Majesty's Government much appreciate his assurances, and hope that he will effect a settlement by which the Beni Sakhr tribesmen will be fully compensated for the damages and losses which they have suffered.

3. In regard to the second point, which relates to air matters in which King Ibn Saud and His Majesty's Government are mutually interested, I am to transmit to you copies of two memoranda which had been prepared in the Air Ministry. These memoranda explain the position as it exists to-day and the wishes of His Majesty's Government for the future. It is the desire of His Majesty's Government that, if a satisfactory settlement is reached in regard to the main object of your mission, namely, the situation existing on the Nejd-Iraq frontier, and if a suitable opportunity presents itself, and if you are satisfied that the general atmosphere is favourable, you should discuss with His Majesty both the question of a possible air route along the south-west coast of the Persian Gulf and also the question of the supply of British pilots and mechanics to organise and operate His Majesty's own air service. You will observe that His Majesty's permission has already been sought for a reconnaissance party to visit the coast of Hasa in order to select suitable landing-sites for possible use in connexion with the projected air route to India. His Majesty has so far felt unable to grant the desired permission, and it is hoped that, if the advantages of the establishment of an air service along the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf are explained to King Ibn Saud, his concurrence in the visit of a preliminary reconnaissance party may be obtained. If, therefore, you are satisfied that there are good prospects of success, you should raise the matter with him and endeavour to obtain his concurrence, as also his acceptance of the offer of His Majesty's Government in regard to the supply of British pilots and mechanics.

The subject should not, however, be broached unless your negotiations in regard to the situation on the Nejd-Iraq frontier reach a successful conclusion. It is important that in the conduct of your mission no action should be taken which might give colour to the view that the interests of the Iraq Government have in any way been subordinated to those of His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.

J. E. SHUCKBURGH.

[E 2262/80/91]

No. 51.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 30.)

(No. 48.)

Sir,

Jeddah, April 9, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of an article which appeared in the "Al Ahrar" of Beirut, dated the 24th ultimo.* My Italian colleague, who drew my attention to this article, considers that it must have been inspired by one of the Syrian employees of the Hejaz Government, probably by Yusuf Yasin, the editor of the "Um-el-Qura."

2. The chief obstacle in the way of the recognition of Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz, Nejd and its Dependencies is the position of Asir, the bone of contention between the Imam and Ibn Saud.

3. By recognising Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz, Nejd and its Dependencies, Italy would offend the Imam, who refuses to acknowledge Ibn Saud's suzerainty over Asir. Ibn Saud insists that recognition must be unqualified. The position as defined by the "Al Ahrar" is correct up to a point, though there is not, as the article would lead one to suppose, any mention in the Italo-Yemen agreement of the Imam's suzerainty over Asir.

4. As stated in my Jeddah report for January last, the Italian Government is ready to recognise Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz, Nejd and its Dependencies, but desire an exchange of notes, either published or unpublished, on the subject of Asir. The Italian note would be to the effect that Italy does not take cognisance of the Treaty of Mecca between Ibn Saud and the Idrisi. Another suggestion is that only those treaties deposited with the League of Nations should be recognised. Ibn Saud is at present unwilling to accept either of these solutions. The Italians may make what mental reservations they wish, the Italian press may put what interpretation it likes on the expression "dependencies," but no notes must, the King insists, be exchanged on the subject.

5. As regards the "Al Ahrar's" statement that Italy is anxious to negotiate a treaty with Ibn Saud with a view to ousting Great Britain from her special position in the Arabian peninsula, I believe this to be false. The geographical situation of the Hejaz and Nejd make the maintenance of friendly relations with His Majesty's Government a necessity. Ibn Saud's dominions are bounded by countries where British influence is paramount, and Ibn Saud depends largely on the goodwill and help of British authorities for the success of the pilgrimage.

6. Trade with the Hejaz is bound up with the pilgrimage. The requirements of the pilgrims and of the officials and merchants are met almost entirely from India. Most of the leading Hejaz business houses have their head offices in British India. It is thus out of the question that any political considerations should cause a diversion of commercial traffic from India to Italy. Trade with England, as distinct from trade with the British Empire, is practically negligible. Such imports as there are from the United Kingdom (coinage, condenser plant, steam rollers, &c.) could not be conveniently or profitably introduced from Italy. For as long as the pilgrimage continues to be the main source of revenue of the Hejaz, trade with India will continue. The development of the Hejaz on western lines being excluded by religious considerations, trade with Europe must remain strictly limited. Trade does not depend on sentimental or even political ties; it is a question of commercial expediency, and India is and will doubtless remain the obvious and normal market for the Hejaz.

7. A copy of this despatch with its enclosure is being sent to Cairo and Beirut.

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

[E 2263/332/91]

No. 52.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 30.)

(No. 49.)

Sir,

Jeddah, April 9, 1928.

I SEE from Lord Lloyd's despatch No. 39 of the 14th January, a copy of which you were good enough to forward to me under cover of your despatch No. 26 of the 24th February, that King Ibn Saud is seeking to make capital out of his attitude towards bolshevism by giving the impression that the strong action recently taken by the Hejaz authorities was taken in British interests.

2. Though undoubtedly actuated by a desire not to act in direct opposition to the interests of His Majesty's Government by allowing Bolshevik influences to work in the Hejaz, the King has good and sufficient reasons of his own for so acting.

3. In the first place, as I had the honour to state in my immediately preceding despatch, the natural market for the Hejaz is British India. Hejaz merchants, who, largely owing to their readiness to replenish at need the depleted coffers of His Majesty, exercise considerable influence, have in most cases their head offices in Bombay. They have, therefore, everything to lose by a diversion of commercial traffic from India to any other country. The attempt of the Soviet to introduce commodities such as flour and sugar at prices competing with those quoted for Indian imports met with the stoutest opposition on the part of local merchants. The position of the latter was greatly strengthened by the fact that the most important of their number is also the Governor of Jeddah.

4. A second reason why Ibn Saud must at all costs prevent the dissemination of Bolshevik propaganda in the Hejaz is the fear that pilgrims may be contaminated. It may appear at first glance that this danger is one to cause alarm to the Governments of India, the Dutch East Indies, Malaya and Egypt rather than to Ibn Saud himself. The suspicion, however, that pilgrims were imbibing in the Hejaz the poison of communistic doctrines would be quite sufficient to justify the Governments affected in withdrawing from the pilgrimage their special sanction and support. I have continually urged this consideration on the Hejaz Minister for Foreign Affairs and the King is, I am convinced, fully alive to the dangers of rendering the pilgrimage less popular. Not only the prosperity but the very existence of the Hejaz depends on the pilgrimage.

5. As I had the honour to state in my last Jeddah report, the Soviet representative does not hide his disappointment at the meagre results obtained by his agency during their four years' stay in the Hejaz. The open attempts to influence Ibn Saud in which Khakimoff appears to have indulged on his first appointment here met, I gather from the reports of my predecessors, with definite snubs. The Soviet's latest endeavour to gain favour and influence by the introduction and distribution of cheap food-stuffs has met with an equally decided check.

6. It is more difficult than would appear to "get at" pilgrims. From the moment of their arrival at Jeddah they pass according to their nationality under the control of the mutawifs or their agents and no person of other nationality may attach himself to any party. Any attempt by an unauthorised person to visit these parties of pilgrims would be immediately detected in Mecca, where, owing to the concentration of all pilgrims in houses in the proximity of the mosque, close surveillance is easily effected.

7. The Soviet agency may, of course, endeavour in other ways than by poisoning the minds of pilgrims to take a hand in disturbing the peace of the world. I cannot think that they are in any way connected with the recent troubles on the Iraq frontier, though it is a supposition which I have heard advanced by intelligent observers, and the idea appears to underlie Signor Gasparini's recent remarks to the Governor-General of the Sudan. My Italian colleague is fully convinced; he has, indeed, proof that Ahmed Senussi is in correspondence with the Soviet agency. Though he is unaware of the subject matter of the correspondence, he suspects that the Senussi is seeking pecuniary assistance to carry out his plan of return to his country.

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

[E 2306/2068/91]

No. 53.

Consul, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 2.)

(No. 30.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, May 2, 1928.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton:—

"Arrived Jeddah to-day, receiving excellent welcome. King arrived at Medina to-day, and I expect to begin conversations here in four or five days."

(Repeated to Cairo, Bagdad and Jerusalem.)

[E 2400/677/91]

No. 54.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 7.)

(No. 60.)

Sir,

Jeddah, April 20, 1928.

WITH reference to Lord Monteagle's letter of the 11th February, I have the honour to transmit herewith a first list of Arab personalities.

2. Copies of the enclosure to this despatch are being sent to Cairo, Bagdad, Jerusalem (2), Jerusalem for transmission to the Royal Air Force Officer Commanding in Palestine and Transjordan, Delhi, Aden, Beirut, Damascus, Singapore, Khartum through Port Sudan, Lagos (2).

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

Enclosure in No. 54.

*Arab Personalities.**Emir Saud ibn Abd-el-Aziz ibn Saud.*

SECOND surviving son of Ibn Saud and his heir apparent. Governor of Nejd, which he rarely leaves. In 1926 paid a short visit to Egypt to obtain eye treatment. Reported in March 1928 to have been proclaimed in Riyadh heir to the joint thrones of Hejaz and Nejd. Apparently a man of prepossessing appearance and strong character. (April 1928.)

Emir Feisal ibn Abd-el-Aziz ibn Saud.

Aged 27. Third surviving son of Ibn Saud and Viceroy of the Hejaz. Visited England in 1917 and 1926. Has not justified early hopes. His appearance bears out the current report that most of his time is devoted to the ladies of his household rather than to his official duties; he has recently earned the contemptuous nickname of "bint." As Viceroy he has made no mark, and his chief official preoccupation seems to be in keeping his masterful and ambitious tutor, Hafiz Wahba, the assistant Viceroy, at arm's length. Is friendly with Mr. Philby, whom he met in Nejd in 1917-18 as a young boy. (April 1928.)

Abdulla Damluji.

Minister for Foreign Affairs. Formerly called Abdulla Said Effendi. A native of Mosul, he became a student in the Turkish Medical College at Constantinople, and is said to have stayed in Paris for a time. Styles himself "doctor," but is reported not to have completed his studies before being expelled for unnatural vices, which are commonly considered to remain with him. He seems to have been serving in the Turkish army when Ibn Saud took Hasa in 1913, when he transferred his allegiance to the King. He was appointed to his present position on the fall of Jeddah. He attended the Uqair Conference in 1922 and signed the protocol as Ibn Saud's representative. Took part in the negotiations leading to signature of the Treaty of Jeddah in 1927. He is on closest terms of intimacy with Mr. Philby, whom he met and accompanied in 1917, and whom there is reason to believe he consults on most

questions of foreign policy. He is, moreover, in close business relations with Philby, for whose firm (Sharqieh, Limited) he has obtained certain Government contracts with large pecuniary benefit to himself. He is thoroughly mercenary. In 1926 he accompanied the Emir Feisal to London and brought back an increased delight in strong drink and cards. He is unpopular in Mecca, especially with stricter Moslems. He speaks French and a little English; has pleasant manners and appearance and generally a European outlook; he can thus claim to be considered the best available man for his post. He exercises little independent authority in the absence of the King, and the latter when in the Hejaz is his own Foreign Minister. Is Anglophile in sentiment and would be more actively so if freed from the influence of his associate Philby. (April 1928.)

Fuad Hamza.

Assistant to Dr. Damluji. This young Syrian was educated at the Beirut Mission College and has a fair knowledge of English. He came to the Hejaz towards the end of 1926. He first gave English lessons to sons of Indian merchants residing in Mecca, and then secured an appointment in the Foreign Office through his compatriot Yusef Yassin, who was acting Foreign Minister in the absence of Dr. Damluji. He apes the strict Wahabi and scarcely conceals his contempt for his chief. During the negotiations which preceded the conclusion of the Treaty of Jeddah he supported the obstructions of Yusef Yassin. (April 1928.)

Hafiz Wahba.

Assistant Viceroy of the Hejaz. An Egyptian who maintains the closest relations with the Egyptian consul in Jeddah and travels on an Egyptian passport. Educated at El Azhar, he took an active part in the pan-Islamic movement. Was strongly anglophobe during the Great War and was deported from Egypt and India, where he was in touch with the Khalifat movement. Established himself in Koweit, where he opened a school. Followed Ibn Saud to Riyadh and in the subsequent Hejaz campaign. After the fall of Jeddah he became sole administrator of Mecca. In the Hejaz he is anglophile and a strong opponent of the Syrian group in Mecca. Was one of the King's counsellors during the negotiations at Bahra in 1925 and at Jeddah in 1927. He incurred royal displeasure late in 1927 owing to an incident in connexion with the negotiations regarding the Egyptian "Mahmal." His nomination to represent Ibn Saud at the abortive Koweit Conference of 1927 was generally accepted to be a device for his temporary removal from the Hejaz. His practice as Assistant Viceroy of working independently and without instructions has caused him to be cordially detested by the Emir Feisal. (April 1928.)

Yusef Yassin.

Apparently of Syrian origin. Former pupil of Rashaid-el-Riza, editor of "El Mnar," of Egypt. An ardent Wahabi and religious fanatic with strong anglophobe and stronger francophobe tendencies. Editor of the "Um-el-Qura," the Mecca newspaper, and has acted as Minister for Foreign Affairs in the absence of Dr. Damluji. Was one of the King's counsellors during the negotiations resulting in the Bahra and Hadda agreements, 1925. He was extremely obstructive throughout the conversations which preceded the signing of the Treaty of Jeddah. In all his dealings with the British Agency has proved himself an arch-obstructionist and hair-splitter. Of unpleasant appearance and boorish manners. He accompanied Ibn Saud to Nejd in October 1927. (April 1928.)

Abdulla Fadl.

Native of Qasim (Anaiza) and formerly subject of Ibn Rashid. Became Jeddah manager of Ibn Saud's favourite business house of Messrs. Ibrahim Mohammed Salih-el-Fadl, of Bombay and Karachi. Rendered many services to Ibn Saud, for which he suffered imprisonment at the hands of King Hussein. Earned Ibn Saud's gratitude, but was for long the butt of all cheap local wit. Was present at the discussions preceding conclusion of the Treaty of Jeddah. Was appointed Ibn Saud's delegate for the discussions on the subject of the Italian recognition of Ibn Saud, and proceeded to Asmara, where he achieved conspicuous unsuccess. His appointment as Acting Assistant Viceroy of the Hejaz in November 1927, in the absence of Hafiz Wahba, seems to have brightened up his wits and his appearance. (April 1928.)

Mohammed Abd er Rahman-el-Fadl.

Half-brother of Abdulla from whom he took over the management of the Jeddah branch of Messrs. Ibrahim Mohammed Salih-el-Fadl. A simple man with no apparent interest in politics. Has some influence with Ibn Saud. (April 1928.)

Haji Zeinal Ali Reza.

Elder half-brother of the Kaimakam of Jeddah. Came to the Hejaz as a domestic servant in a Persian household and peddled his way into commerce. As a member of one of the wealthiest houses in Jeddah he suffered considerably under King Hussein's practice of raising forced loans. Is over 75 years of age and rapidly breaking up, a process accelerated by the death in Constantinople in 1927 of his son Kasim. His son Yusef manages the Bombay branch of the business, the Jeddah direction of which is now in the hands of the Kaimakam. The other surviving son, Mohammed Ali, is a prominent pearl merchant in Bombay where he is a member of the Haj Committee. This son also gives monetary support to a school in Mecca and one in Jeddah (Mudrasset-el-Fulal). (April 1928.)

Abdulla Ali Reza.

Kaimakam of Jeddah. Followed his half-brother Haji Zeinal to the Hejaz and helped him to build up the present business. Married well and then spent fifteen years in commerce in Bombay. On his return to Jeddah he assumed control of the Haji Zeinal business. Appointed Kaimakam of Jeddah under King Hussein and has held the post ever since. Probably the richest man in Jeddah. Agent for the Bombay and Persia Steam Navigation Company (Limited) and the Oriental Navigation Company (Limited). Has been known to use his official authority to further his commercial interests but enjoys the almost unique distinction of being incorruptible. A man of sterling qualities and deservedly general popularity. (April 1928.)

Mohammed Husein Nasif.

Grandson of Omar Nasif of Egyptian origin who came to Jeddah to work as a coolie, advanced in position under the Turks and obtained a post in the Sultan's household in Constantinople before finally returning to the Hejaz to become the richest property owner in Jeddah. Mohammed Husein Nasif has some reputation as an Arabic scholar, and claims to have the only library in Jeddah. He is an ardent Wahabi, thus incurring the enmity of the ex-King Hussien, who did not hesitate to exact frequent loans from him. He houses Ibn Saud when the latter comes to Jeddah. Is said to be untrustworthy and for that reason to have been given no office, but has a fine air of mingled wisdom and benevolence. (April 1928.)

Suleiman Aman Gabil.

Takes his name from the now extinct Jeddah Gabil family who emancipated his father, a slave of Abyssinian origin. Worked as a shop assistant, and finally became a merchant with connexions in Medina. Made Reis-el-Beledia, a minor and paid appointment, under the Turkish régime, and continued to hold that office under the ex-King Hussein, with whom he was a great favourite. He made hay while the sun shone, and is now probably the third richest man in Jeddah. Agent for the Shustari Line. Managing director of the Shirket-es-Saudia, the pilgrim motor transport company inaugurated by Ibn Saud. A lively and entertaining host. (April 1928.)

Abd-el-Qadir Gabil.

Younger brother of Suleiman Gabil, by whom he is completely outshone. A quiet charming man with a boyish face. He helps in his brother's business, and is credited with no political interest.

Suleiman Shefiq Pasha.

Formerly Turkish Military Governor of Basra, from which post he was withdrawn at the outbreak of the Great War. Became Minister for War in Damar Ferid Pasha's Cabinet. Fled to Egypt from Mustapha Kemal. Came to the Hejaz early in 1926, and acted as chief organiser of the Islamic Conference that year. Appointed Inspector-General of Government Offices, but met with some opposition in this office, so became chief engineer of the Jeddah-Mecca road. Of the latter he has in six months covered with sand two kilom. of small and large boulders at a cost of £16,000.

Arthur Van de Poll.

Apostate Dutchman who has assumed the Moslem name of Haji Mohammed Husein-el-Mahdi. Said to be the younger son of a good Dutch family and is one of the richest men in Jeddah. Married as his second and probably bigamous wife an Abyssinian, whom he maintains in dusky splendour in Monte Carlo. Agent for the Holt Line. (April 1928.)

[E 2407/668/91]

No. 55.

Consul, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 7.)

(No. 32.)

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 18.

Following from Sir G. Clayton:—

Jeddah, May 7, 1928.

"King only arrived at Jeddah to-day, and conversations open to-morrow. It must therefore be some days before I am in a position to make any [? recommendation], and I may not be able to conceal the fact that His Majesty's Government have caused delay in delivery, as ammunition is now at Port Sudan. In that case we must face the effect which holding up of ammunition by His Majesty's Government may have on my conversations."

[E 2407/668/91]

No. 56.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul, Jeddah.

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 32.

Following for Sir G. Clayton:—

Foreign Office, May 10, 1928.

"You may use your discretion as to release of ammunition provisionally detained at Port Sudan, or refer to me for fresh instructions as you think best in view of course of your discussions. Necessary instructions are being sent to authorities at Port Sudan."

[E 2416/80/91]

No. 57.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah).

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.)

MY despatch No. 26 of 24th February: Ibn Saud's letter to Lord Lloyd and Italian policy in Arabia.

Following for Sir G. Clayton:—

Foreign Office, May 11, 1928.

"You may, if you think fit, inform Ibn Saud verbally that situation described by him in his letter of 6th December to Lord Lloyd has been discussed with Italian Government, who have assured His Majesty's Government (1) that they have no secret agreement with Imam of Yemen; (2) that they desire to maintain friendly relations with Ibn Saud; and (3) that they would welcome the restoration of more cordial relations between Ibn Saud and Imam."

"Copy of Italian communication containing these assurances was sent to Jeddah in my despatch No. 73 of 19th April."

[E 2568/2068/91]

No. 58.

Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 34.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, May 15, 1928.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton:—

"My conversations with Ibn Saud up to date have shown that main issue is the dismantling of Busaiyah and other desert posts. He contends that his people do not discriminate between military and police posts, both of which they regard as preventing free movement throughout the desert, and also as bases for offensive action against them in the future as they have been during recent operations; he maintains that his strong objection to laying down a frontier in 1922 was due precisely to his fear that it would lead in the course of time to the establishment of desert posts and fortified posts, which would interfere with the free movement of tribes and would cause violent and justifiable resentment amongst them. His representative, Muhhamerah, exceeded his instructions by signing convention, and Ibn Saud was thereby faced with choice of admitting a principle which he strongly disapproved of or breaking with His Majesty's Government. He accepted article 3 of Uqair Protocol No. 2 as a way out of the dilemma, because he considered it was expressly designed to meet his objection by preventing erection of any fortified posts at any of the water points in the desert area, thus leaving them perfectly free to his tribes. He insists, therefore, that he is unable now to accept a restricted interpretation of article 3 or to agree to the maintenance of posts without losing complete confidence of his tribesmen, and consequently his ability to control them."

"On my side I have insisted that His Majesty's Government must maintain principle that either Government is free to take whatever measures it may consider necessary for proper control and defence of the desert within its own territory. I cannot admit so wide an interpretation of article 3 as Ibn Saud demands, and the only admissible limitation is that posts should not be erected in the vicinity of the frontier."

"I have used every argument to persuade him to drop his insistence on dismantling of posts, and I shall continue my conversations with him on the lines laid down in your instructions."

"I think, however, that he will probably find himself unable to give way, and will inform me that he cannot hold himself responsible for his tribesmen if His Majesty's Government insist on maintenance of posts. In this case I shall have to bring these conversations to a close, and question is on what terms to do so."

"In view of Ibn Saud's attitude, there are three possible courses: Firstly, to give way at least in some measure on question of posts; secondly, to give Ibn Saud a final refusal; thirdly, to suspend negotiations."

"The first would mean giving up a vital principle. The second might drive Ibn Saud to desperation or make it impossible for him to retain control of his tribes. The third is the one I recommend, and I request authority to inform Ibn Saud, if necessary, that I propose to suspend our conversations in order to report his views fully to His Majesty's Government, who will communicate their final reply at a later date. I realise that this proposal is not a solution, but it is my considered opinion that a definite rupture in the present state of things would be ill-timed and possibly dangerous. I cannot tell for certain how Ibn Saud will receive a proposal for postponement should I find it necessary to make it. If he is unwilling to adopt it, my only course is to inform him that I must report situation to you by telegram and ask for instructions."

"On the other hand, if I find him agreeable to it I shall endeavour to secure further maintenance of peace for the time being, but avoid giving an impression that postponement implies any possible change of policy with regard to posts."

"In view of the fact that pilgrim feast falls on the 28th, and Ibn Saud must be in Mecca for at least one week before and two weeks after it, I beg your instructions may be sent to me at your earliest convenience."

[18296]

"Some progress is being made towards provisional agreement on various subsidiary questions between Mesopotamia and Nejd delegates, including a not unsatisfactory draft put forward by the latter for a *bon voisinage* agreement, but these questions, of course, depend on settlement of main issue."

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 53.)

[E 2588/2068/91]

No. 59.

Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 16.)

(No. 35.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, May 16, 1928.

MY telegram No. 34.

I learn from private but reliable source that Philby has sent press communiqué probably to the "Daily News," stating, amongst other things, that negotiations have broken down as Sir G. Clayton had not full powers to discuss certain questions which Ibn Saud had come to Jeddah to discuss.

Philby has no knowledge of progress of negotiations other than what he may have gleaned from the King and his advisers, with whom he is in closest touch.

The position is still as set forth by Sir G. Clayton in my telegram under reference.

[E 2638/2068/91]

No. 60.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah).

(No. 26. Important.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, May 19, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 34 of 15th May: Negotiations with Ibn Saud.

Following for Sir G. Clayton:—

"You are authorised to adopt third alternative, namely, suspending negotiations and making communication to Ibn Saud on the lines you propose.

"I am glad to note last paragraph of your telegram, and feel sure that you will continue on those lines as much as possible."

[E 2679/484/91]

No. 61.

Mr. Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 67.)

Sir,

Jeddah, May 1, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith my report on the situation in the Hejaz for the period the 1st to the 30th April, 1928.

2. Copies of this report are being sent to Cairo, Jerusalem (2), Jerusalem for transmission to the Royal Air Force Officer in Palestine and Transjordan, Bagdad, Aden, Simla, Beirut, Damascus, Khartum through Port Sudan, Singapore, Lagos (2).

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

Enclosure in No. 61.

Jeddah Report for period April 1 to April 30, 1928.

THE news received early in the month that Ibn Saud was prepared to meet Sir Gilbert Clayton at Jeddah caused general relief among Ibn Saud's well wishers. The situation in Nejd was becoming difficult. A large force, now officially stated

to have numbered 60,000, had been collected near Iqba. Ibn Saud, before the receipt of the invitation of His Majesty's Government to meet Sir Gilbert Clayton, had despatched Sultan bin Bujad to reason with the tribes. On the receipt of the message he immediately sent his cousin, Saud ibn Abdul Aziz al Arafah, with orders to the chiefs to disband their forces and meet him at Bureida, explaining to them that His Majesty intended to repair to Jeddah to find a solution of their difficulties by negotiation with a representative of His Majesty's Government. Ibn Saud duly left Riyadh for Bureida, and is now daily expected at Medina, whither many of the notables have repaired to meet him. Sir Gilbert Clayton and the members of his mission are expected to arrive here on the 2nd May in H.M.S. "Dahlia" from Port Sudan. The King is expected to spend one day at Medina, proceed direct to Mecca and arrive at Jeddah on the 4th May. Up to the time of writing, however, there is no news of his arrival at Medina. As he is now four days overdue, it is believed that he may have experienced more difficulty than he expected in reducing the chiefs to reason at Bureida.

2. Amongst those who have left for Medina to receive the King is Hafiz Wahba, who arrived from Cairo on the 25th instant. He has gained much prestige locally as a result of his mission to Egypt. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, his assistant and most of the Jeddah notables made a special trip to the quarantine island, where Hafiz Wahba was detained one day. It is therefore to be presumed that the cloud under which Hafiz Wahba left this country for Koweit has now been dispersed. He paid a brief call at this Agency at 8 p.m. on the 28th, explaining that he must leave immediately that night for Medina, as it was of the greatest importance that he should see Ibn Saud before other influences had an opportunity of working on His Majesty. As Hafiz Wahba had at one time a marked tendency to demand as the only solution of the Iraq-Nejd dispute the almost complete abandonment of the case for Iraq, it is not altogether clear what counsel he is likely to give the King. In the course of the actual negotiations, he and Damluji, the only advisers with any width of vision, can, however, probably be relied upon to adopt a more conciliatory attitude than Yusef Yassin and Fuad Hamza, both of whom are by nature obstructive. Yusef Yassin is responsible for the editing of the "Um-el-Qura," and also for the drafting of many of the less gently worded of the King's letters.

3. In the edition of the "Um-el-Qura" of the 30th March, much space was devoted to a criticism of Sir Henry Dobbs's statement of the situation, as reproduced in the "Times" of the 13th March. Raids cannot, the writer maintains, be prevented by the building of fortifications but only by the establishment of cordial relations and by mutual confidence. To prevent raids of the Shammar through Syria, the more natural course would, the writer continues, surely be the erection of a fort on the Iraq-Syrian rather than on the Iraq-Nejd frontier. If, as Sir Henry Dobbs asserts, the Busaiyah post can only accommodate fifteen persons, what is its use as a protection against raiders? The "Um-el-Qura" continues to maintain that Busaiyah is the first well after the frontier, and must therefore be regarded as one of those referred to in the Uqair Protocol. Answers to all these comments have been supplied to the King. Shammar raids stopped as a result of action by Iraq. The Busaiyah post was a police and intelligence post and not designed for offence. Busaiyah is not the first well after the frontier. As the writer of the leading articles in the "Um-el-Qura" has access to most, if not all, official correspondence, his comments are disingenuous.

4. Special preparations are being made for the King's reception both at Jeddah and at Mecca. We are officially informed that these preparations are the outcome of the spontaneous determination of a loyal and loving population to do honour to their beloved sovereign. It may be so. The streets of Jeddah are to be decorated with flags, and shops and houses are to be bedecked on the initiative of the occupants. The house which the King will occupy in Jeddah during the coming negotiations has been refurnished.

5. Preparations for the reception and accommodation of Sir Gilbert Clayton's mission have been very efficiently carried out. They are to be housed at Kandara, the large bungalow some 2 miles north of Jeddah, which the King himself usually occupies during his short visits to the coast.

6. Early in the month an unusual incident occurred at Mecca. On the 6th instant, a Bedouin mounted the pulpit of the Holy Mosque before the time of the preaching of the regular Friday sermon. He appears to have enunciated doctrines or recited prayers to which the congregation took exception. He was pelted with every kind of missile, but as his ardour was not thereby effectively

damped, he was fired at and wounded in the neck. He was transported to hospital, where he was pronounced insane. He is said to have recovered from his wound. The incident gave rise to so much wild talk that the Mecca Foreign Office were requested to supply an official version. Their version follows the lines of the above account, which was supplied by an eye-witness, except that they omit any mention of shooting. They state that "the congregation pelted him with anything that came to hand, but he did not come down until he was hit too much." Dr. Damluji states that "it is a small matter of no importance." Early reports brought by chauffeurs and pilgrims from Mecca stated that the unauthorised preacher to be a new Mahdi from Syria, others believed him to be a member of the Yemenite mission to Ibn Saud, but it is now established that he was a Bedouin from Medina.

7. The Yemenite mission is still at Mecca awaiting the arrival of the King. It is difficult to see how His Majesty will find the necessary time to devote to them, as the days before the pilgrimage are likely to be fully occupied with conversations with Sir Gilbert Clayton's mission. It is rumoured that the Yemenis have instructions to insist on the withdrawal of Ibn Saud's mandate over Asir. In the probable event of negotiations on this basis proving fruitless, the Imam may move and to this end has concentrated forces at Mehdi, while Ibn Saud also has taken precautions against a possible attack. These reports are unconfirmed. Meanwhile, the mission is treated with the greatest respect, but is allowed little contact with the outside world; a member of the Italian consul's staff was unable to obtain access to them.

8. The newly-appointed Egyptian consul, Mohammed Said, and the vice-consul, M. Matar, arrived in Jeddah on the 5th instant. The former has thrown himself with much *élan* into the life of Jeddah, and, from a social point of view, is an asset. Whether he will be a success officially is doubtful. In conversation with one of his colleagues, he has prepared the ground for possible failure by fairly frank criticism of his predecessor.

9. At the request of the Hejaz Government, the conference which it was proposed to call early in the year at Haifa to discuss technical details concerning the reconditioning of the Hejaz Railway, has been postponed until the first days of July. There is likely to be much competition for the appointment as Hejaz delegate. Dr. Abdullah Damluji has earmarked it for himself, but Hafiz Wahba or Yusef Yassin may well be chosen, as Damluji's services so soon after the pilgrimage could with difficulty be dispensed with.

10. The four Hejaz postal employees whom the Government of Palestine were good enough to accept for training have now terminated their six months' course, and His Majesty's High Commissioner has been requested to arrange for their return. These trained employees should prove an asset, though it must be admitted that the Hejaz postal services are surprisingly efficient.

11. The number of pilgrims arriving from overseas has shown a very marked decline on last year's figures, and it is now safe to predict that the total number will not far exceed 90,000. During the last month some 10,000 only have arrived, bringing the total to 68,000. Six thousand Egyptians only are expected, and the number of Persians is unlikely to exceed 2,000. North Africans may be more plentiful than last year. According to present advices of sailings from India 25,000 is the maximum, a very heavy drop on last year's 37,000. It is difficult to gauge the influence which exaggerated reports of events in Nejd may have exercised. There were several reasons for the special popularity and size of last year's pilgrimage. The pilgrimage was expected to fall on a Friday, thus increasing sevenfold the resulting merit and reward, and for the first time it was generally known to be safe, and many came who would normally have come in 1924 or 1925. As a result of the unexpected falling off in numbers, motor car companies are making small and in many cases no profits. The new condenser is now working; it has an output of 150 tons a day. There is now no risk of lack of water at the time of the return pilgrimage. It will thus be possible to allow a much greater number of pilgrims to proceed to Jeddah immediately after the pilgrimage than was last year possible.

12. There is news, unconfirmed as yet, of the departure of a Russian pilgrim ship, which it is understood is proceeding from Odessa, via Constantinople.

13. A commission has been appointed at Mecca for the better control of mutawwifs. Among the duties of the commission will be the inspection of pilgrim lodging houses, the hearing of pilgrims' complaints, and the reporting to the central authorities of any infraction by mutawwifs of regulations.

14. Among improvements introduced for the amelioration of the pilgrims' lot are the following:—

Reservoirs have been repaired and others built at Muna, Arafat and Mecca.

Large tents have been ordered and are to be erected for the use of pilgrims on the Jeddah-Mecca and Mecca-Arafat roads.

Twenty ambulances for the removal of the sick and dead from Muna and Arafat have been ordered.

Twenty motor trucks will be employed to remove refuse from Mecca and from the camps at Muna and Arafat.

15. A large consignment of the coins, silver and nickel, to which reference is made in Jeddah report for January, have been received. The King recently placed a large order, through Sharqieh (Limited) for furniture for his personal use, and this has now arrived. Plants and seeds for the Royal garden at Mecca have been sent from the Sudan and Cyprus and India.

16. The number of slaves who took refuge in the Agency during the month under review was four. All of these were at their own request manumitted locally and have remained in the Hejaz.

[E 2688/2068/91]

No. 62.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 37.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, May 21, 1928.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton:—

"My telegram No. 34 and your telegram No. 26.

"In agreement with Ibn Saud, I have suspended conversations on written understanding that during period of suspension each side agrees to take no offensive action and to do everything in its power to prevent its tribes from committing acts of aggression, and to arrange that should any untoward incident occur immediate communication will take place between the two Governments in order to prevent any misunderstanding.

"I have agreed with Ibn Saud on text of a communiqué to be published simultaneously by Governments concerned and will cable its text later."

(Repeated to Bagdad, Jerusalem, Cairo and Bushire, No. 63.)

[E 2689/668/91]

No. 63.

Consul, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, May 21, 1928.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton:—

"My telegram No. 32.

"Question of ammunition detained at Port Sudan has not been raised by Ibn Saud, but early decision regarding it is essential. Conditions of off-loading at Port Sudan are such as to make it impossible to ensure secrecy of embargo, and knowledge of it will have an adverse effect upon Ibn Saud, and may also cause him to place future orders in other countries. From the point of view of suspension of conversations with Ibn Saud I can only recommend immediate release and acceptance as inevitable of any risk there may be of it being eventually used in hostilities against Iraq. I can, however, offer no 'reasonable security' such as is requested in your telegram No. 18, and I am in no position to appreciate importance of criticism which might be aroused in Iraq and at home."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Cairo, No. 64.)

[E 2695/2068/91]

No. 64.

Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) G.T.C.

MY telegram No. 37.

Following from Sir G. Clayton:—

Jeddah, May 21, 1928.

"I have assented to issue by Ibn Saud of the following official communiqué:—

"Negotiations between His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Nejd and the British Mission under Brigadier-General Sir Gilbert Clayton were opened at Jeddah on 8th May, 1928, with a view to settling certain outstanding matters between the Nejd, Iraq and Transjordan. Satisfactory progress was made in several of the questions under discussion. But owing to the approach of the pilgrimage season it became necessary to suspend negotiations, and the British Mission is taking advantage of this opportunity to return to London to report progress to His Majesty's Government, subsequently returning to Jeddah at the earliest opportunity to resume negotiations. It is a matter for satisfaction to note that these negotiations were animated throughout by a spirit of conciliation and genuine desire on both sides to arrive at a settlement of a nature to ensure good relations between the three countries concerned."

"This communiqué is being published here to-day, and I recommend publication by you of a communiqué on similar lines."

(Repeated to Bagdad, Jerusalem and Cairo, No. 65.)

[E 2706/1/91]

No. 65.

Agent, Jeddah, (No. 69) to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received May 22.)

(No. 40.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, May 22, 1928.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton:—

"Following detailed and circumstantial report has been received by Ibn Saud in Mecca and communicated by him to me:—

"1. On 25th or 26th April eight cars came to Aiwij and tried to persuade tribes to migrate into Iraq.

"2. On 27th or 28th April aeroplane flew over Lina and dropped bombs

"3. On 27th or 28th April aeroplane flew over tribes in Bashuwa area and dropped bombs.

"4. On 29th April three aircraft flew to Lina, where one made a forced landing. The other two aircraft flew back to Iraq and then returned, but, failing to repair machine, burnt it and flew back. A large crowd of tribesmen watched these proceedings, but in deference to the King's strict orders took no hostile action.

"The King has protested vehemently to me against these incidents, especially at a time when negotiations had been mutually agreed upon. Report has placed me in a most unfortunate position on the eve of my departure. I have had to send the King a provisional reply expressing my surprise and regret at reception of such a report, and informing him that I would telegraph at once for confirmation. If the news is true, or even partly so, the maintenance of peace during period of suspension will be jeopardised unless I am authorised to convey an expression of regret to the King. Cornwallis and Glubb can throw no light on incidents, which are alleged to have occurred on dates subsequent to their departure. Should be grateful for immediate reply which I can communicate to Ibn Saud before I leave."

[E 2704/2068/91]

No. 66.

Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 22.)

(No. 41.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, May 22, 1928.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton:—

"I shall leave Jeddah towards the end of this week and proceed via Port Sudan and the Nile to Cairo. Thence I propose to take first suitable steamer to the United Kingdom, preferably P. and O. leaving Port Said 3rd June. If time permits I propose to visit Jerusalem for a day before leaving Port Said in order to explain the position of Transjordanian question to Lord Plumer. Subject to permission of Lord Plumer, to whom I am referring direct, I shall bring Antonius to London, where I consider his presence essential.

"Cornwallis and Glubb leave to-day for Suez and return to Bagdad by aircraft, leaving Cairo on 31st May, and will give all information to the High Commission."

(Repeated to Bagdad, Jerusalem and Cairo, No. 70.)

[E 2743/668/91]

No. 67.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah).

(No. 27.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, May 23, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 38 of 21st March: Ammunition for Ibn Saud.

Following for Sir G. Clayton:—

"His Majesty's Government have now authorised release of ammunition. Necessary instructions are being sent to Port Sudan."

[E 2743/668/91]

No. 68.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah).

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, May 24, 1928.

FOLLOWING for Sir Gilbert Clayton:—

"My telegram No. 27 of 23rd May.

"You will realise deplorable effect which would be produced on public opinion here and on our relations with Ibn Saud if any of this ammunition found its way to Wahabi tribesmen before peace on Iraq frontier can be definitely guaranteed by Ibn Saud. Use your own discretion as to saying anything to him to this effect."

[E 2763/1/91]

No. 69.

Agent, Jeddah, (No. 77) to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received May 26.)

(No. 44.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, May 25, 1928.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton:—

"Your telegram No. 92 S. noted.

"The information received by Ibn Saud and communicated to me appears to be substantially correct. In the present state of negotiations the explanation given does not enable me to reply satisfactorily to Ibn Saud's protest against violation of his frontiers, which he maintains was unwarranted and unprovoked

at a time when peaceful conversations had for some time been definitely agreed upon (*vide* his letter of 5th April accepting my mission) and British delegate was already on his way to Jeddah.

"It would only aggravate the situation to use explanations advanced in your above-quoted telegram and in Bourdillon's letter to Cornwallis, which I have opened and read.

"I am therefore getting out of an awkward predicament as best I can by promising to [? groups omitted] I reach London."

[E 2764/2068/91]

No. 70.

Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 26.)

(No. 45.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, May 26, 1928.

MY telegram No. 41.

Sir G. Clayton and Mr. Antonius left Jeddah 25th May for Egypt via Port Sudan.

(Repeated to Cairo, Bagdad and Jerusalem, No. 78.)

[E 2798/2068/91]

No. 71.

Consul Stonehewer-Bird to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 72.)

Sir,

Jeddah, May 9, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to report, with reference to my telegram No. 30 of the 2nd instant, that Sir Gilbert Clayton, accompanied by Mr. Cornwallis, Mr. Antonius, Flight-Lieutenant Moore and Captain Glubb, arrived at Jeddah on the 2nd instant from Port Sudan in H.M.S. "Dahlia."

2. A ceremonial reception was accorded to Sir Gilbert Clayton. The Foreign Minister and his assistant, the *kaimakam* and I, accompanied by His Majesty's vice-consul, went on board to welcome the mission as soon as the ship had dropped anchor and fired her salute.

3. A guard of honour was drawn up at the landing-stage and cars stood ready for the immediate conveyance of the mission to Kandara. Arrangements both for Sir Gilbert Clayton's reception and for the accommodation of the mission were most efficiently carried out. I understand that His Majesty considered last year that sufficient attention had not been paid to entertainment. In consequence, since the arrival of the mission there has been an almost unbroken chain of dinner-parties.

4. The King passed through Jeddah on his way to Mecca from Medina on the 5th instant. He did not, however, make his ceremonial entry until the 7th instant. In consultation with Sir Gilbert Clayton and Commander Cotton, of H.M.S. "Dahlia," it was agreed that the sloop should await the King's arrival and should fire a salute on his entry into the town.

5. The mission and the agency staff were received by the King on the morning of the 7th instant and other foreign representatives in the afternoon. In the evening a large banquet was given to celebrate His Majesty's return to the Hejaz. The mission, the officers of H.M.S. "Dahlia," the agency staff, the foreign representatives and most of the European colony attended. During dinner H.M.S. "Dahlia" gave a firework display, which was much appreciated.

6. The first meeting between Ibn Saud and Sir Gilbert Clayton took place this morning at 8.30 A.M.

I have, &c.

F. H. W. STONEHEWER-BIRD.

[E 2806/2806/91]

No. 72.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 409.)

Sir,

Cairo, May 19, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to report that Haroun Bey Selim Abou Sahla, Governor of Suez, Hamed-el-Bassel Pasha, Vice-President of the Wafd, and Abdurrahman Azzam, a Deputy of the left wing of the Wafd, are proceeding on the 21st instant to Jeddah for the pilgrimage.

2. Haroun Bey Selim is no friend of the Wafd, and his pilgrimage has probably no special significance. It is, however, difficult to believe that the other two are solely concerned with the religious aspect of the pilgrimage. It is presumed that they have been charged by the Prime Minister to engage unofficial conversations with Ibn Saud, in the hope of finding a basis for the settlement of outstanding questions such as the Mahmal and the recognition of Ibn Saud by Egypt. They have no doubt been selected because they are both Arabs.

3. The Egyptian Government has delegated Kamal-el-Khesheh Bey, Director of Works in the Ministry of Communications, Hamed Shaker Bey, an official of the Ministry of Wakfs, and Ali Hassan Bey, Director of the Service of Buildings in the Ministry of Public Works, to investigate the possibilities of certain urban improvements in the Hejaz, including the utilisation of Ain Zobeida for the water supply of Mecca. I understand that this mission was arranged between Ibn Saud and the Egyptian consul at Jeddah, who apparently took the initiative in the matter.

4. I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's agent and consul at Jeddah, who, perhaps, can obtain some information regarding the activities of these two missions in the Hejaz.

I have, &c.

LLOYD, High Commissioner.

[E 2796/277/91]

No. 73.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 399.)

Sir,

Rome, May 21, 1928.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 475 of the 14th April last, respecting the proposal to withdraw from Kamaran the two platoons of Indian troops at present there and to substitute for them a small body of native police, I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a *note verbale* in which the Italian Government, while thanking His Majesty's Government for their communication, request further particulars in regard to the recruiting and organisation of the native police force.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

Enclosure in No. 73.

Note verbale.

(Translation.)

THE Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of *note verbale* of the 24th April last in which His Britannic Majesty's Embassy were good enough to inform them that His Britannic Majesty's Government had decided, for reasons of economy, to remove the Indian battalion stationed at Aden and in consequence to withdraw from Kamaran the two platoons of that battalion maintained on the island; and that, in order to ensure the maintenance of order on Kamaran Island, His Britannic Majesty's Government proposed to substitute for the two platoons a small body of native police, while periodic visits to the island would be paid by aeroplanes from Aden, without, however, entailing the permanent maintenance of any additional staff, force or machine there; and, finally, that until the native police force could be organised, fifty men of the Aden troop, subsequently to be disbanded, would be maintained.

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The Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs thank His Britannic Majesty's Embassy for this communication which, after due consideration, they consider to be in accordance with paragraph 4 of the memorandum on the Italo-Britannic conversations in Rome of the 7th February, 1927.

The Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs would be grateful to His Britannic Majesty's Embassy if they would very kindly furnish them with details regarding the recruitment and organisation of the native police force which is to be instituted on Kamaran.

Rome, May 18, 1928, Year VI.

[E 3022/1/91]

No. 74.

Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 13.)

(No. 52.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, June 12, 1928.

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs states that before mission left he protested to Sir G. Clayton against certain raids committed by Transjordanians against Nejd during course of negotiations and promised to furnish details later. He now states following raids to have taken place:—

1. May 5.—Daghish Abu Tayah raided and stole three herds of camels from Shararab.

2. May 13.—Howeitah raided and carried off one herd of camels from Shararab.

3. May 15.—Raid by Howeitah near Jauf; one herd of camels taken.

4. May 20.—El Atna-bin-Jari, Qasi Abu Duneik and Obeid Abu Tayah raided Qalban-al-Kawakba, carried off three herds of camels from Anaiza and on their return plundered caravan from Maan.

Hejaz Government protests and demands—

Firstly, severe punishment of raiders.

Secondly, return of loot.

Thirdly, blood-money for killed and compensation for losses.

(Repeated to Jerusalem, No. 87.)

[E 2996/80/91]

No. 75.

Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 100.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, June 15, 1928.

MY despatch No. 605 of 12th May: Relations between His Majesty's Government and Imam of the Yemen.

In reply to Imam's request for extension of truce beyond 1st June, His Majesty's Government stated that they would agree to prolong truce until 17th July on condition that, as guarantee of good faith, he would withdraw from Dala town not later than 20th June; otherwise they would resume liberty of action on that date. Imam has now refused to evacuate Dala by 20th June, and Acting Resident is therefore being authorised, on expiration of time limit, to have warnings dropped, and if these are disregarded to secure fulfilment of our condition by means of air action.

Please communicate above urgently to Italian Government, for their information.

[E 3125/2068/91]

No. 76.

Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 55.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, June 18, 1928.

MY telegram No. 39.

In letter dated 16th June King states that he must return to Nejd not later than middle of August, as he promised his tribes to inform them of result of negotiations by that date. His presence in Riyadh at earliest possible date is also necessary in consequence of his father's death.

He asks that these considerations may be brought to yours and Sir G. Clayton's notice, and His Majesty's Government may be moved in consequence to resume negotiations as soon as possible before 15th August.

(Repeated to Bagdad, Jerusalem and Cairo, No. 97.)

[E 3233/3182/91]

No. 77.

Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 58.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, June 25, 1928.

MY telegram No. 52.

Minister for Foreign Affairs writes that between 4th May and 20th May Ghadhub-bin-Habn and Ibn Haidar of Beni Sakhr raided Al Atna, and that Shararat was three times raided by Baljahi and Daghish. Details are not yet available.

Government protest against these breaches of agreements and of the understanding with Sir G. Clayton; they demand the return of looted property and compensation. They also ask for an explanation of the attitude of Transjordanian Government in the face of these repeated attacks on Nejd, in order that they may decide what measures to take.

(Repeated to Jerusalem, No. 104.)

CHAPTER II.—SYRIA.

[E 349/349/89]

No. 78.

Consul-General Satow to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 7.)

Sir,

Beirut, January 12, 1928.

WITH reference to Foreign Office despatch No. 141 of the 13th October, 1924, I have the honour to report that, for some little time past, the local press has been showing a renewed interest in the scheme for linking up Tripoli with Beirut, and possibly also with Haifa, by rail. It will be remembered that in 1923-24, when General Weygand was High Commissioner, preliminary surveys were made. Since then the matter has slumbered. One of the main difficulties has been understood to be the question of obtaining the necessary funds. It has also been suggested that M. Ponsot, although at first in favour of the scheme, has of late been opposed to the establishment of rail connexion with Haifa, fearing that the construction of a port at that place would react unfavourably upon the commercial prosperity of Beirut and adversely affect the "Damas-Hama Prolongement" Railway and port.

2. However that may be, the local press reports the impending arrival in Beirut by rail via Aleppo of M. Chonut (chairman of the board of directors of the Régie générale des Chemins de Fer et Travaux publics, and interprets this news as showing that the question of the railway has now reached its final stage. It is added that the Régie générale takes over the working of the Damas-Hama Prolongement Railway and of the Beirut Port Company.

3. According to one newspaper, which is apt to be well informed in such matters, and which speaks only of the Tripoli-Beirut Railway, there is no question of a local group, headed by Negib Bey Sursock and the Lutfallahs, financing, as was rumoured, the construction of the new line, seeing that the Lebanese Government can itself provide the funds. This evidently means that the share of the Lebanon in the excess customs duties which have been accumulating for some years with a view to the definite fixing of the Lebanese share in the Ottoman Public Debt is to be drawn upon. At one time it was understood that this reserve fund, which is believed to be considerable, was to be used for public works undertakings of a general nature, and that the various States had been asked to submit schemes as to how the money could best be used. That it is no longer so to be used seems to be confirmed by a statement which appeared some little time back in the press to the effect that the States had been requested not to proceed with their schemes.

4. It is claimed by the newspaper already quoted that the Damas-Hama Prolongement has the definite right to construct the new line. In 1913 it obtained a concession for a line from Rayak to Ramleh, which was rendered impossible by the war. In 1925, when the company's concessionary rights were readapted, it was promised an equivalent concession or fair compensation payable after five years.

Copies of this despatch have been sent to Jerusalem and to Aleppo (No. 5).

I have, &c.

H. E. SATOW.

[E 486/141/89]

No. 79.

Consul-General Satow to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 30.)

(No. 9. Confidential.)

Sir,

Beirut, January 11, 1928.

DURING the year ended the 31st December last the Lebanon made a very distinct step in the direction of normal conditions. Public order was, on the whole, good, and no organised disorders or cases of abnormal crime occurred, and it was found possible to carry out disarmament operations on a limited scale in certain districts. This happy state of things was reflected in a good summer season. It is in a country like this impossible to give figures having any pretension to accuracy, but the number of summer visitors must certainly have exceeded 10,000. They were able to move freely about the country, and apparently left the Lebanon feeling fairly satisfied. The efforts

made to attract visitors are thus bearing fruit, but it is necessary that these efforts should not be relaxed.

2. Better public security everywhere was effected in the reopening of the southern (Nairn) route to Bagdad, which took place in May. The Palmyra route now appears to be but little used, and the hotel built there by the defunct Beyrouth-Baghdad-Téhéran Automobiles (Eastern Transport Company) is reputed to be becoming rapidly derelict. No untoward events fortunately occurred on the desert routes, but I incline to the belief that the various regulations intended to safeguard travellers are far from being strictly enforced, and that it would be worth the while of the Syrian and Iraq authorities to arrange a meeting to discuss the question. There is always the chance that on a route of this nature some unexpected tragedy may occur.

3. Some progress was made during the year with the compensation, and more especially with the rehousing, of sufferers from the disturbances of 1925-26, but much remains to be done and the important question of the rebuilding of Rashaya has not yet been settled.

4. As regards the administration of the Lebanon, the country's prosperity is undoubtedly retarded by the de Jouvenel Constitution, which gave an entirely unnecessary stimulus to petty political intrigue. Time and such energy as exists are vainly wasted over matters which bear no relation to the real interests of the inhabitants. Owing to a dispute between the Senate and the Chamber, the budget was not voted until April. This led in due course to a practically empty treasury, which could only be replenished by drawing on the Lebanon share in the excess customs receipts—a dangerous practice. Public discontent with the situation in general and heavy taxation in particular led to a demonstration in August, as a result of which shops and offices were closed for several days. One result of this was a decrease of 29 per cent. in the temettu tax. In October an important step towards the simplification of the machinery was taken by uniting the two Chambers into one. Details as to how this was achieved were duly reported at the time. It seems likely that this is but the first step, and that further improvements will be introduced later. There had previously been a ministerial crisis in May and a second one was threatened at the end of the year. Actually, the latter did not materialise, but, as reported in my despatch No. 4 of the 9th January, another change of Ministry has just occurred.

5. During the year the French High Commissioner at last broke his silence, and made in July a declaration in which in many words he said what amounted to very little. There is a good deal of criticism of his silence on the lines that if he says nothing it is because he has nothing to say. He is undoubtedly a very cautious man, and seems to be so anxious to take the right course that he weighs the pros and cons almost to the point of apparent indecision. Various schemes are presumably being prepared, but in actual fact very little seems to have been actually done during the year. This is partly because the present policy seems to be to leave more and more to the Lebanese Government. In theory this is no doubt excellent, but as regards practical results it is less so. Most branches of the public service are inefficiently conducted, and in several of them, notably the Police, Public Works and Health Departments, serious scandals came to light during the year. As for the Finance Department, a nominal inspection is alleged to be in progress, but as it has been entrusted to inspectors friendly to the late Minister, no irregularities are likely to be brought to light. This does not, of course, mean that irregularities have not occurred. It seems useless to mention once more the unsatisfactory judicial organisation. It is a matter of public knowledge and general complaint. All that has so far been done is to produce a draft scheme of reorganisation which is soon to be submitted to the Lebanese Chamber. What will happen to it there no one can foresee. As likely as not the new Cabinet of three members which has just been formed will fall. When it does there will be another "crisis," and all the officials down at the Serai will cease working and once more devote themselves to political discussion and intrigue. Down at the port there is much confusion. The Customs sheds were burnt down last May. A few temporary sheds have been erected and a khan some distance from the quay has been hired, but no definite scheme of general reconstruction seems yet even to have been decided upon. It is sometimes a mystery to the lay mind how shipping agents and merchants can carry on, but they manage to do so. The winter has so far been unusually fine, but should heavy and continuous rain fall, as it presumably eventually will, much damage to goods is likely to occur.

6. The beginning of the year found us in pretty general disfavour with the French owing to the presence of Druses at Azrak in Trans-Jordan and their incursions thence into Syria. This question was eventually settled as the French wished it to be,

and the settlement, of course, reacted favourably on local Anglo-French relations. Towards the end of the year there were signs of further friction in the same region, due to the indeterminate nature of the frontier. An unmarked boundary was also responsible for various incidents on the Iraq-Syria frontier near the Jebel Sinjar, the settlement of which was not rendered easier by a marked divergence between local British and French views on the matter at issue. On the other hand, a visit by the first submarine flotilla, followed by one from Rear-Admiral David Norris in H.M.S. "Royal Oak," passed off very successfully and left good feeling in its train. On the whole the atmosphere at the High Commission is a friendly and helpful one.

I have, &c.

H. E. SATOW.

[E 501/349/89]

No. 80.

Consul-General Satow to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 15.)

Sir,

Beirut, January 21, 1928.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 7 of the 12th January relative to the revival of local interest in the Tripoli-Beirut-Haifa Railway, I have the honour to report that a Beirut newspaper, the "Orient," published on the 17th and 18th January two articles, one of which by a local engineer criticised the scheme for a line along the coast from Tripoli and argued in favour of a normal gauge line to Beirut via Rayak and Hamana (Lebanon), while the other reproduced an interview with the M. Chenut already mentioned. Of this latter the gist was that nothing had been decided, that M. Chenut had come here in the normal course of events on a tour of inspection and that, so far as the talked-of line was concerned, it was a simple possibility. M. Chenut was firm in claiming for the "Damas-Hama-Prolongement" the right to build the line if it were built, disclaimed all knowledge of the financial side of the question and said that he was simply the man who lays the rails. His message to the public was that his rails were ready to be laid down whenever he was asked to lay them.

2. On the other hand, in the brief address of the Lebanese Prime Minister to the Chamber on its reassembling in extraordinary session on the 18th January, appeared the passage of which the following is a translation from the French version of the original Arabic:—

"On many occasions public opinion has demanded through its representatives here present, and rightly so, that every effort should be devoted to the carrying out of important works of public utility, the first of which is the building of the Nakura-Tripoli Railway. In this order of ideas the Government is resolved to give to the country all such satisfaction as is possible, and that with all desirable speed."

As it seems legitimate to assume that Bechara-el-Khoury drew up his declaration in consultation with the French authorities, it is after all possible that the latter do intend that the long-talked-of railway, or some part of it, should be built.

Copies of this despatch have been sent to Jerusalem and to Aleppo No. 8.

I have, &c.

H. E. SATOW.

[E 1472/141/89]

No. 81.

Consul Hole to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 20.)

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Damascus, February 23, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to submit a summary report on the late ministerial changes in Syria.

2. Since the Cabinet was modified in December 1926 (see my despatch No. 312 of the 6th December, 1926), a campaign had been directed against the Damad's Government and in particular against Yussef-el-Hakim, the Minister of Justice, on whose counsels the Damad was accustomed to rely. The Damad had never been

over-popular—by his acceptance of the post of Chief of the State of Syria during the revolt he had alienated the Nationalists, extreme and moderate, and his foreign blood made him further unacceptable to the principal Damascene families. This breach was widened by his surrounding himself with a semi-royal *étiquette*, apparently on the advice of Yussef-el-Hakim; and by the beginning of this month it was generally felt that he was supported only by the French administration.

3. The pacification of Syria being considered complete, the French Government decided to take steps to elect a Constituent Assembly, and to elaborate an organic statute. It is impossible to state with certainty that the press campaign, which led the Damad to resign, was engineered by the French administration; that is certainly the opinion of members of the outgoing Government. A number of attacks in newspapers known to be in opposition were followed by an attack in the "Sha'ab"—a journal locally supposed to be in French pay. The Damad went to Beirut to obtain satisfaction and support from the High Commissioner, and was presumably disappointed. His resignation was offered on the 9th February; he explained that he had accepted the presidency in the hope of piloting the ship of State into still waters, that he was content to have succeeded, but that conceiving that certain persons might doubt his impartial conduct of the elections, his conscience obliged him to make room for a new Government. M. Ponsot congratulated him on his success and on the tenderness of his conscience and accepted his resignation.

4. Attempts were made at Beirut to form a provisional Government of a Nationalist colouring that would be amenable to the advice of the High Commission; various combinations of extremists and moderates were suggested; His Majesty's consul-general at Beirut is better acquainted with these negotiations and has doubtless reported on them. In Damascus it became evident that the High Commissioner's delegate had come to the conclusion that Sheikh Tajeddine would form a completely subservient Ministry and was pressing M. Ponsot for a decision in that sense. He won his point and on the 16th February, M. Ponsot during a short stay at Damascus gave his approval to a Cabinet composed as follows:—

Sheikh Tajeddine-el-Hassani: Prime Minister.

Said Bey Mahassen: Minister of Interior.

Soubhi Bey Nayal: Minister of Justice.

Djemil Bey Ulchi: Minister of Finance.

Mohamed Bey Kurd Ali: Minister of Education.

Toufic Bey Chamieh: Minister of Public Works.

Sheikh Abdul Kader-el-Kilani: Minister of Agriculture and Commerce.

5. This Ministry came into power officially on the 18th February. The Damad is not replaced, his functions being provisionally exercised by the President of the Council.

6. The Ministry is in no way remarkable. Some Ministers have previous experience. Tajeddine himself neither experience nor talent nor even education; he is the figure-head of a triumvirate of whom Djemil Bey Ulchi and Wasiq Bey Muayyad are the dominant partners. The latter holds no portfolio, but has accepted the more permanent post of Director of the Syrian Department of Land Registry. Djemil Bey Ulchi is the only outstanding figure. He is locally regarded as the betrayer of Feisal to the French, who appointed him Prime Minister on taking possession of Syria. A capable and unscrupulous politician.

7. The immediate object of the Ministry is to carry out the elections; they expect to encounter little difficulty in the rural districts, but foresee strong Nationalist opposition in Damascus, Hama and Aleppo and certain defeat in Homs. They are, however, confident of securing a working pro-French majority in the Constituent Assembly.

8. On the occasion of the formation of the Ministry the High Commissioner published decrees abolishing the state of siege and press censure, and granting a partial amnesty. The last is not extended to thirty-nine political offenders and twenty-eight persons condemned for crime, though the distinction is in some cases a trifle shadowy. The chief political exceptions are Dr. Shabbander, the Atrash family, Shukri Kuwatli, Nabih-el-Azmeh, Adel-el-Azmeh, Nazih-el-Azm-el-Muayyad, Adel Arslan and Said Haidar, who may be regarded as the organisers of the revolt: Mustapha Wasfi, Faouzi Kaoukji, Yahya Hayati, Said-el-As, Tewfik Haidar, Shekib Wahab and Mustapha Khalili, all active leaders in the field; Shekib Arslan and Ihsan Jabri of the Syrian delegation at Geneva; Hassan-el-Hakim, the secretary of the Syro-Palestinian Committee at Cairo. There are also a number of

extreme Nationalists who do not seem to have taken any part in the revolt, but whose absence is presumably desirable during the elections.

9. A number of political exiles are allowed to return; the list includes Fares Khoury, Fouzi Gazi, Husni Barazi, Lutfi Haffar, and Sadallah Jabri, all prominent members of the party of the People; they are expected to arrive to-morrow, and I gather that preparations are on foot to give them an impressive welcome.

10. I am sending copy of this despatch direct to His Majesty's High Commissioners at Bagdad and Jerusalem, to His Majesty's consul-general at Beirut, and to the British Resident at Amman.

I have, &c.

E. C. HOLE.

[E 2401/141/89]

No. 82.

Consul Hole to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 7.)

(No. 33. Confidential.)

Sir,

Damascus, April 13, 1928.

THE Cabinet formed by Sheikh Taj-ed-Din, on which I reported in my despatch No. 21 of the 23rd February, has devoted the two months of its existence to the careful preparation of the elections for the Constituent Assembly. The primary elections were held during the last three days; the secondary elections are announced for the 24th April.

2. Taj-ed-Din has been extremely active, visiting all the important centres and conducting protracted negotiations with the Nationalist party. His assurances of entire sympathy with their views and desire to collaborate with them were taken at something less than their face value by the Nationalists; but as they apprehended that a refusal to treat them with the present Government would result in repressive measures, they accepted his overtures and agreed to work with him, on the understanding that four of the twelve seats of Damascus should be allotted to their candidates.

3. Neither party seems to have had any belief in the sincerity of the other's intentions, and at the last moment the Nationalist Committee took occasion to submit a list of ten candidates instead of four, basing their repudiation of the agreement on undue interference with the liberty of the elections on the part of the Minister of the Interior.

4. There seems to be no doubt that many serious abuses occurred, nor that the Prime Minister as well as the Minister of the Interior was involved. The Nationalists, however, have chosen to confine their attacks to the latter, and the succession of demonstrations of the last few days has been levelled against the Minister of the Interior, and care has been taken to emphasise their affection for Sheikh Taj-ed-Din.

5. In nearly all wards the Nationalist candidates have been successful and it is asserted that in those where they experienced a set-back extensive bribery was practised and the ballot boxes were tampered with by police. The most important quarters concerned are the Keimariyé, which is the ward of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, and the Saroudja quarter, where the Minister of Interior was returned. The allegations seem to be justified.

6. The French authorities have taken pains to stress their aloofness from the conduct of these primary elections, and the High Commissioner in visiting a number of the polls assured voters that they were absolutely free to vote as they pleased.

7. Candidates in the forthcoming secondary elections number about seventy, most of whom have also been returned as electors. The only conspicuous absence from the lists is Fares-el-Khoury, who is barred from standing by his Protestant faith: that community being too small to be entitled to a representative under the present electoral system.

8. I am sending a copy of this despatch direct to His Majesty's consul-general at Beirut, His Majesty's consul at Aleppo, His Majesty's High Commissioners at Jerusalem and Bagdad, and the British Resident at Amman.

I have, &c.

E. C. HOLE.

[E 2683/141/89]

No. 83.

Consul Hole to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 35. Confidential.)

Sir,

Damascus, April 25, 1928.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 33 of the 13th April concerning the primary elections at Damascus, I have now the honour to report on the final elections, which were held on the 24th April.

2. Several lists of candidates were presented, but the only issue was between the Government and the Nationalists. Until the primary elections were held, the two parties had been in agreement to submit a joint list of six Governmental and four Nationalist candidates, exclusive of the Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish members. When it became apparent that the Government was using the public services to procure the return of its own nominees, the Nationalists put in an independent list, but included Sheikh Taj-ed-Din himself, with the evident object of placating him personally and thus averting or at least limiting the abusive measures which the Government was expected to take.

3. Sheikh Taj-ed-Din allowed his name to be put at the head of all lists, and I believe him to be perfectly indifferent to any consideration but his own accession to power.

4. In Damascus the result has been a sweeping victory for the Nationalist party; the nine candidates who obtained an absolute majority in the first day's polling (and are thus definitely elected) all figure in the Nationalist list. One is the Jewish candidate, and was unopposed. Seven are Nationalist leaders, and the eighth is Sheikh Taj-ed-Din, the only member of his party to be returned.

5. Three Moslem and one Greek Catholic Deputy remain to be elected, and a second ballot will be held on the 27th April.

6. The elections aroused great interest, and out of some 700 voters only nine failed to record their votes.

7. The Government made strenuous efforts to buy the votes of the villages, and on the day of the poll sums varying from £500 to £600 sterling were sent to each village as relief for damage sustained in the late rebellion, and official cars were provided to convey the electors to town; however, no particular success seems to have attended this tardy philanthropy, and indeed in some cases the money was sent back and the cars refused.

8. There was naturally a certain amount of demonstration and disturbance. The square on which the polling station abuts was packed from an early hour, and the task of dealing with the crowd had been left to the Syrian gendarmerie. Foz-el-Bakri, an active leader in the rebellion, whose pardon had been procured by Taj-ed-Din presumably at the price of his support, had marshalled a gang of stalwarts armed with staves to ensure the peaceable conduct of the elections. Their presence aroused some hostility in other camps and the Syrian gendarmerie intervened and was stoned. The French officer in command was struck between the eyes with a stone, and the square was cleared by a series of charges. Another French officer was wounded, but on the whole the day was remarkably quiet.

9. Of the six Ministers forming the Government, three presented themselves for election at Damascus and were defeated; it is, however, possible that some may be returned on the second ballot. The Minister of Education did not stand. The two remaining Ministers are candidates at Hama and Aleppo respectively. The Minister of Agriculture is sure of success at Hama, as there are three candidates for three seats; at Aleppo I understand that the elections are contested. The situation of the Ministers who fail to obtain seats is somewhat obscure, but I gather that it is argued that in the case of a Constituent Assembly ordinary parliamentary rules do not hold and there is no need of evidence of the confidence of the nation. The defeated Ministers will therefore accept office, unless as a concession to Nationalist feeling the Government decides to make scapegoats of the Ministers of Interior and Finance, who were chiefly concerned in the abuses in the primary elections.

10. No date has yet been fixed for the meeting of the Assembly, which will be chiefly occupied in elaborating a Constitution and defining the relations between the State of Syria and the mandatory Power, and, so far as I can hear, the Nationalist party has not yet come to any decision as to the form which their activities will take. If some sort of coalition develops from the present situation, it will be interesting to

study the reaction to the responsibilities of office of the Nationalists, who have so far enjoyed the privileged situation of a martyred Opposition.

11. I am sending copy of this despatch direct to His Majesty's High Commissioners at Jerusalem and Bagdad, the British Resident at Amman, His Majesty's consul-general at Beirut and His Majesty's consul at Aleppo.

I have, &c.
E. C. HOLE.

[E 2684/141/89]

No. 84.

Consul Hole to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 36. Confidential.)

Sir,

Damascus, April 27, 1928.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 35 of the 25th April regarding the elections, I have the honour to report that the results came as a complete surprise to the French authorities, who had apparently relied on assurances given by the voters which they had no intention of fulfilling. Certain officials seem also to have misled them, and some of these have paid the penalty of their optimism.

2. An effort is being made to-day to secure the election of Government candidates to the remaining four seats. The three Ministers have withdrawn their candidature, and propaganda is being concentrated on Fozi-el-Bakri, Said-el-Gazzi, Abdel Qader-el-Khateeb and Shaker Qaem. Of these the first two are popular, or were till they joined the Government; the last two are well known as political weathercocks.

3. The square has been cleared and picketed with gendarmes, and to obtain admission voters are required to present documentary proofs of identity. No Nationalist scrutineers are allowed at the ballot-box until the polling is completed, when candidates will be admitted to the count. The chief of police has been dismissed, and his place provisionally occupied by Wasiq Bey Muayyad, Director of the Public Domains (see my despatch No. 21 of the 23rd February, paragraph 6). In view of these arrangements it is highly probable that the four Government candidates will be elected.

4. Sheikh Taj-ed-Din himself seems to have incurred the distrust of the French Administration, who suspect that he has deliberately misled them as to the result of the elections while providing for his own return on the Nationalist list.

5. The Minister of Public Works, Toufic Bey Shamieh, who is a Nationalist, but had been induced to join the Government from, I think, sincere motives of public interest, has now handed in his resignation. It has not been accepted.

6. I am sending copy of this despatch direct to His Majesty's High Commissioners at Jerusalem and Bagdad, the British Resident at Amman, His Majesty's consul-general at Beirut, and His Majesty's consul at Aleppo.

I have, &c.
E. C. HOLE.

[E 2807/141/89]

No. 85.

Consul Hough to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 45.)

Sir,

Aleppo, May 17, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to transmit the report on conditions in the Sanjak of Deir-ez-Zor, which was promised in my despatch No. 41, dated the 8th May, 1928.

2. I am sending copy of this despatch direct to His Majesty's High Commissioner, Bagdad, His Majesty's consul-general at Beirut, and His Majesty's consul, Damascus.

I have, &c.
W. HOUGH.

Enclosure in No. 85.

Notes on the Sanjak of Deir-ez-Zor.

Limits.

THE Sanjak of Deir-ez-Zor comprises the north-east part of the State of Syria. Its boundaries are shown on the "Carte administrative des Etats de Syrie," forwarded to the Foreign Office with Aleppo despatch No. 55 of the 26th July, 1927. From that it will be seen that its southern boundary runs in a broken line running south-east from Meskene, where the Euphrates changes its course from south to east, to a point on the provisional south-east border of Syria, about 80 miles south-west of Abu Kemal. Its north-west border is not the Euphrates all along, as might be expected, but deviates from it to the east so as to leave that part of the Kaza of Jerablus which is east of the Euphrates within the Vilayet of Aleppo. The point of this is that the Kaza of Jerablus is settled land, and the confines of the Sanjak of Deir-ez-Zor have been so fixed as to correspond with the northern part of the nomadic zone. Its northern and eastern limits are, of course, the Turkish and Iraqi borders.

Physical.

While most of the country is desert, with the exception of some fertile land near rivers, the desert has various degrees of intensity. The Euphrates divides the region into two zones of markedly different characteristics. The right bank rises fairly close to the river into abrupt cliffs, over which is a plateau of rough formation. This southern desert is very arid, and increasingly so as one continues east. Normally there should be spring pasturage in the western parts, but when the writer passed through at the end of April 1928 the whole region appeared quite uninhabitable.

The northern region is known as the "Jezireh," or the island. It is, geographically speaking, Upper Mesopotamia. In general it is a plain, through which run considerable tributaries of the Euphrates, the Balikh to the west, and the Khabur, with its sub-tributary, the Jaghjagh, to the east. The Balikh would be a permanent stream, were it not that in summer all its water is used for irrigation, so that it does not reach the Euphrates. The Khabur is a permanent full stream, which, at the end of April 1928, was 15 feet deep and 50 yards across. The regions about the Balikh are in general good cultivable land. The Khabur valley is cultivated, and irrigated by norias. Apart from river valleys, the plain is less arid as one goes north. The regions to the east of the Khabur had good pasturage when I passed, and the extreme north-east, in the "Bec de Canard," was said to be the best of all. Pasturage can normally be found all summer in the northern parts. The region in the triangle west of the Khabur and north of the Euphrates is the most repulsive desert of all, uninhabitable at all times.

There are two ranges of mountains, the Jebel Abdul Aziz, west of the Khabur, and the Jebel Sinjar to the east, through which the provisional Iraqi frontier runs. Neither is completely arid.

The Euphrates valley itself is in general cultivated, but the land appeared surprisingly sour and poor. The height of the banks at all times of year, except when the river is in flood, makes it very difficult to apply the ordinary native methods of irrigation. Extensive schemes of irrigation with Government aid have been much talked about, but there is no indication at all when, if ever, the next stage beyond talk is expected to be reached. The Euphrates has a width of 200-300 yards in this part of its course, and a depth which may vary according to the season from 5-50 feet. When I passed Deir-ez-Zor the river was a boiling spate running, by actual measurement, at 3 metres a second, or 7 miles an hour. In these conditions it not infrequently changes its bed, which makes land-owning in the neighbourhood rather a speculative business.

Population.

The only considerable town is Deir-ez-Zor, which has a population approaching 30,000. The existence of such a considerable agglomeration in the middle of a particularly bad part of the desert is made possible by a sufficiently fertile island in the Euphrates, on which the town is partly built. Deir-ez-Zor is the centre of the desert trade. Its inhabitants are almost entirely Arabs. Meskene, Rakka and Meyadine, the other places of note along the Euphrates, are small and squalid villages. Hassetché in the north-east, at the confluence of the Khabur and the Jaghjagh, has

an interesting history. Until the last few years it was a tiny Arab settlement of no importance. Favoured by its position in a spot where the wilderness is more than usually green, it is developing into a prosperous little town of several thousand inhabitants, at least half of whom are Christian refugees from Turkey (Armenians and Chaldeans). It is becoming a central trading mart for the Upper Jezireh. Kameshlyk (the last syllable has varied spellings) is a place with a similar history. It practically did not exist till a year or two ago, and the name only appears on the more recent maps. It is less than a mile south of Nissibin, at which it looks over the Turkish frontier. It is really an offshoot of Nissibin on the Syrian side, inhabited by people who would normally live there but prefer, for political or economic reasons, to live on the mandated side of the border. The importance to the French of such a place is obvious. It is not the only instance of such duplication. Jerablus has an entirely new quarter on the Syrian side, which started as a refugee camp of Armenians, and is now considerably more prosperous than its Turkish counterpart.

To turn now to the Bedouin, who form the characteristic and most important part of the population, I have been unable to get an estimate of their number. The French have doubtless tribal lists, from which an approximate figure could be arrived at, but I have not cared to ask them, fearing that the motives of such a question might be misunderstood. Moreover, the boundaries of the sanjak correspond to no physical realities, and tribes may cross and recross them without being aware of the fact, so that their numbers are far from constant. It is well known that the nomad mode of life is not a matter of preference, although doubtless many Arabs have become so used to it that they would find a settled existence irksome, but is imposed upon them by economic necessity. The country provides none of the necessities of life except pasturage. Their wealth consists of sheep, for wool, mutton, and the sheep's-milk butter, which, nauseating to a European, commands such a ready market. They also keep goats, whose hair is used for making their tents, camels for transport, horses for riding, and occasional mules and donkeys for miscellaneous purposes. For liquid cash they will have nothing but gold and silver. They must maintain contact with the outside world, to sell the produce of their sheep, and their extra camels (horses they practically never sell), and buy the elementary necessities of life, namely, clothing, all articles of diet except mutton, and arms and ammunition. All other commodities are classed as luxuries. Their nomadic life is a pursuit of pasture for their animals from season to season. An unusually dry winter may occasionally drive them clean out of the desert, to spend the summer as rather unwelcome temporary guests in settled parts of the country.

While I have had no opportunity of making a specialised study of tribal questions, to understand which thoroughly would leave no time for any other form of activity, certain broad outlines strike the casual observer. The west is mainly inhabited by sections of the Anizah Arabs, and the east by Shammar. There is a considerable difference in character between them. The Anizah are more tractable, and more disposed to an understanding of the non-nomadic standpoint. Several of their chiefs have set up as landowners, and see to it that their tenant cultivators are not molested by raids. The Shammar are wilder, fiercer and more turbulent. Neither tribe can be relied on not to raid the herds of a rival faction, or a trading caravan, if a tight control is not kept on them.

Administrative.

Deir-ez-Zor, alone amongst all provinces of the State of Syria, is under the supreme authority of the military power. The officer commanding is the High Commissioner's delegate, and is assisted by a civilian. Moreover, his military control is not confined to the sanjak, but extends west and south to include Palmyra, in fact the whole of the nomadic area up to the confines of Homs and Damascus. It must be said that on the whole Colonel Ripert, whose term of office expires at the end of this month, has done fairly well. For a long time tribal raids and attacks on caravans have been unknown. It is not even certain that a car stranded in the desert would be looted. He also informed me with pride that he had collected from the tribes 99 per cent. of this year's taxes and five years' arrears. Although his military work in controlling and administering the tribes has been excellent, he is of a volatile temperament, and is apt to be impatient and negligent in dealing with matters of routine civil administration. He is also rather mannerless in his personal and official relations. These faults have not made things very happy in his dealings with the Iraq authorities, with whom there is an immense amount of business to be done, and his departure is not being regretted by them.

Political.

Deir-ez-Zor returned Nationalist Deputies, like other districts. The degree of political maturity in the nomadic region being even less advanced than here, it is impossible to say what state of mind amongst the population this phenomenon corresponds to, nor in what way these Deputies will look after tribal affairs in the Syrian Parliament. If they press on the completion of Euphrates irrigation schemes they will more than justify their election.

A series of articles has recently been appearing in the "Syrie," tending to emphasise the importance to Syria of the North-Eastern Jezireh, both political and economical. It was said, with what truth nobody knows, that the Jebel Sinjar is petroliferous. It appeared likely that the object of the articles was to stiffen public opinion against concessions to Turkey in connexion with the frontier dispute, and to prepare the ground for a rectification of the Iraq border.

Communications.

The road from Aleppo to Deir-ez-Zor consists mainly of a desert track on the table-land south of the Euphrates, touched up here and there with metalled stretches where the surface is too rough. The distance is an easy ten hours in dry weather, including all halts. This road will be described in more detail in my forthcoming report on the Aleppo-Mosul trade route. In the Jezireh road-making is quite unnecessary, as the desert presents a uniform surface fit for motor travel in any direction. The only bar consists of the rivers. The Euphrates has a bridge at Jerablus for the railway only, and is nowhere bridged for road traffic. A bridge is being built at Deir-ez-Zor. The Khabur has a good bridge at Suwar. Elsewhere everything must be ferried, and at flood water ferries may be extremely dangerous. It was mainly this that deterred me from returning by the northern track. The motor has already begun to exercise a transformation of local habits, the ultimate consequences of which will be far-reaching and are impossible to estimate.

[E 3029/141/89]

No. 86.

Consul, Damascus (No. 5), to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received June 13.)

(No. 2. Secret.)

(Telegraphic.)

Damascus, June 13, 1928.

LIEUTENANT GRAND, proceeding on leave, arrived with Iraq Minister of Defence, 12th June, and lunched with him and four Nationalist notables. He gave me report of conversation authorised by Minister, who asks whether substance may be communicated to the King.

Four candidates to the Throne of Syria have been approved by French authorities, one from Morocco, one from Tunis, the son of the King of the Hejaz, and the son of Shereef Ali Haidar. The first two are negligible, and the third has withdrawn. If the King of Iraq enters, Emir Zeid and his candidature obtains French sanction, fifty-five Nationalist Deputies are pledged to support. Otherwise a republic will be declared.

(Repeated to Beirut, No. 4.)

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CHAPTER III.—IRAQ.

[E 55/55/34]

No. 87.

Sir R. Clive to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 2.)

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Tehran, January 2, 1928.

PERSIAN Government have unofficially orally asked whether I would telegraph to Bagdad to enquire whether Iraq Government would be willing to discontinue construction of a frontier guard station at Baghshah in transferred territory pending settlement with Turkish Government of frontier matters now being discussed by Persian Ambassador.

I pointed out that Persian Government appeared indirectly to be raising the question of validity of Turco-Persian Protocol of 1913. I was informed in reply that Turkish Government had stated that they did not recognise the protocol. I replied that His Majesty's Government considered the matter settled and not open to discussion.

I added that if, admitting this, the Persian Government arranged with the Turkish Government for some rectification of frontier or if after recognition of Iraq the Persian Government wished by diplomatic means to approach Iraq Government with a view to some small rectification of frontier, I did not suppose that my Government would object.

(Repeated to Bagdad. No. 1.)

[E 55/55/34]

No. 88.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Clive (Tehran).

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, January 5, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 5 of 2nd January: Perso-Iraq frontier.

I approve your language.

[E 112/112/65]

No. 89.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Chewky Pasha.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 17, 1928.

ON the 5th September last the Turkish Ambassador communicated to Sir W. Tyrrell a memorandum, drawing attention to the reported presence of a number of armed Nestorians in the vicinity of the Turkish village of "Aroche." His Excellency also mentioned the question of the retention of their rifles by Nestorians discharged from the Iraq levies, and in a further memorandum, dated the 19th September, stated that, according to a communication received from the Turkish Government, it appeared that a band of armed Nestorians had crossed the frontier on the 9th August last, and had fired upon the Turkish patrols.

2. In the note which I had the honour to address to his Excellency on the 5th October, I pointed out that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the question of the reported presence of armed Nestorians in this area should properly have been dealt with, in the first instance, by the frontier authorities, and, failing agreement between them, by the Permanent Frontier Commission. Enquiries have, however, been made with a view to ascertaining the exact situation on this portion of the frontier, and the Acting High Commissioner for Iraq has reported that the local authorities of that country have no knowledge of any incidents which could form the basis of the reports mentioned in his Excellency's note of the 19th September. The Assyrians to the south of Arish are, in fact, grazing their sheep on their own lands; they have not committed, and do not contemplate, any hostile act against Turkey, and are, moreover, forbidden to approach within two miles of the frontier.

3. As regards the permission accorded to men discharged from the Iraq levies to retain their arms, I have the honour to inform you that the retention of rifles and ammunition by members of the levies on discharge from that force is conditional upon their giving an undertaking not to take such rifles outside Iraq, and also to return to the colours in defence of Iraq if called upon to do so. With a view to the strict enforcement of this undertaking, a further warning against taking rifles outside the boundaries of Iraq has recently been circulated to all members of the force. I may add that His Majesty's Government will be glad to receive from the Turkish Government information of any well authenticated cases of Assyrians (who have been members of the levies) entering Turkish territory in possession of arms, in order that action in conformity with the law may be taken against the offenders on their return to Iraq.

4. In conclusion, I have the honour to inform you that enquiries are being pursued as regards the further points raised in the memorandum which his Excellency was so good as to communicate to me on the 14th November last, relative to the proposed settlement of Assyrians and others in certain areas of Iraq, and I shall not fail to address a further note to you on these questions as soon as I am in a position to do so.

I have, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

[E 943/112/65]

No. 90.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Ferid Bey.

Your Excellency,

Foreign Office, March 5, 1928.

ON the 16th November last your Excellency was so good as to communicate to me a memorandum, dated the 14th November, relative to certain reports of incidents in the neighbourhood of the Turco-Iraq frontier, to which the Turkish Government desired to draw attention.

2. In my note of the 17th January to Chewky Pasha I dealt with the points raised in the first two paragraphs of your memorandum, adding that I proposed, as soon as I was in a position to do so, to address a further note to you with regard to the questions raised in the third paragraph of the memorandum, namely the reported proposals for the establishment of Assyrians and others in the neighbourhood of the frontier, and the allegations respecting the organisation of Kurdish national propaganda in Iraq.

3. As regards the report mentioned in paragraph 3 (a) of your memorandum, I have now the honour to inform you that it is the case that Assyrians are being settled in the Zakho and Amadia districts, but that the settlements are not in the immediate vicinity of the frontier. The settlement nearest to the frontier consists of a number of persons who have been settled in the village of Mai, but arrangements are now being made for these persons to be moved elsewhere. I may add that the settlement of Assyrians in permanent villages is, in the opinion of both His Majesty's Government and the Iraq Government, the surest safeguard against any attempt by them to make armed incursions into Turkish territory; all the settlers are under the supervision of the competent local authorities in Iraq, and there is no reason to suppose that they will violate the frontier.

4. In paragraph 3 (b) of the memorandum you referred to a report that 15,000 Armenians were to be established to the north-west of the town of Mosul. This report is probably due to a misunderstanding, as no scheme for the settlement of Armenians in this area has been in contemplation. It seems possible, however, that the scheme which the Turkish Government had in mind was one which has been under consideration by the Iraq Government, for the settlement of a number of Assyrians in the Baradost area. A final decision has not yet been reached in regard to this project.

5. In the final section of paragraph 3 of the memorandum you alluded to reports that Kurdish nationalist propaganda was being carried on at Amadia, Zakho and other places with the support of officials of the Iraq Government, and even of British officers. This matter was discussed during the fifth session, held in October last, of the Permanent Turco-Iraq Frontier Commission, and it was explained by the Iraqi delegates on that occasion that there is no organised system of anti-Turkish propaganda in the northern Kurdish districts of Iraq, and that there is no foundation whatever for the allegations to that effect which have reached the Turkish Government. I have the

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honour to confirm to you this statement, and trust that the information supplied during the proceedings of the Permanent Frontier Commission will have removed any misapprehensions of the Turkish authorities on this point.

I have, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[E 1854/112/65]

No. 91.

Mr. Knox to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 175.)

Sir,

Angora, March 30, 1928.

I HAVE the honour to refer to your despatch No. 155 of the 5th March regarding the proceedings of Sheikh Ahmed, of Barzan.

2. I thought it preferable, in conformity with the principle enunciated in paragraph 3 of Sir G. Clerk's despatch No. 69 of the 31st January, to cause a verbal warning to be conveyed to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs by the Iraq Chargé d'Affaires. This course appeared to offer the further advantage of giving Sabih Bey the opportunity for a general conversation with the present incumbent of that post, Shukri Kaya Bey, who, as Minister of the Interior, has been closely associated with the abolition of martial law and the creation of a civil inspectorate-general in the eastern vilayets.

3. I found Sabih Bey well pleased with his reception by Shukri Kaya Bey, who expressed himself ready and anxious to discuss with the fullest frankness any suspicions that might arise in either Turkey or Iraq in regard to any hostile activities by individuals in the territory of the other. He mentioned in this connexion reports which had reached him regarding the doings of certain Turks in Iraq, and promised to give to Sabih Bey a detailed statement of any information of this nature which he possessed. He then enquired how His Majesty's Government would view so close a collaboration in these matters between himself and Sabih Bey. The latter replied that he was working here in close harmony with His Majesty's Embassy and that he believed he had our full confidence.

4. Yesterday I took advantage of a visit to Shukri Kaya Bey to enquire his views on present relations between Turkey and Iraq. He told me that, in general, they were highly satisfactory. There were, however, he gathered from intelligence reports that reached him, a few Turkish ne'er-do-wells in Iraq whom he would rather see elsewhere. For instance, Cherkess Edhem (a brigand leader who gained some notoriety during the Greek campaign in Asia Minor) was, according to his information, announcing in Iraq that he was receiving money and support from the British with a view to upsetting the existing régime in Turkey. He knew these Circassians well as empty braggarts, and did not for a moment believe that there was anything behind their talk, but he could not be sure that ignorant Kurdish tribesmen and villagers might not be hoodwinked by it, and he would much like to see such gentry removed.

5. I thanked him for his frankness, and told him that I hoped he would at once impart any information of this nature that might reach him either to Sabih Bey or to me. For myself, I was sure that the Iraq Government would disapprove of such propaganda as strongly as the Turkish, and given sufficient information for the purpose would take immediate steps to put an end to it. He then told me that he was preparing a detailed memorandum of all complaints of this kind, which he would shortly hand to Sabih Bey. I replied that I thought this was much the best course to pursue. It was Sir G. Clerk's desire, and incidentally mine, to leave questions directly at issue between Turkey and Iraq to discussion between his department and the Iraq Chargé d'Affaires, but, if at any time difficulties were to arise which he felt were not being dealt with as he would wish, I would appreciate it as a friendly gesture if he would let me know. I took the opportunity to add that we had watched with satisfaction the excellent welcome accorded to Sabih Bey at Angora, and I was particularly pleased to see the extensive and intimate relations that he had established here. I trust that I have thus set at rest any doubts his Excellency may have had as to the closeness of my collaboration with the Iraq representative.

6. In the course of our conversation, Shukri Kaya Bey told me that Muzahim Bey (whose possible activities in Turkey formed the subject of a letter of the 6th March from the Chancery to the Eastern Department) had asked for authority to come from Constantinople to Angora. He had caused a reply to be returned to the

effect that Muzahim Bey was free as a private individual to travel to Angora, if, he added with a smile, he could obtain the necessary police permit. It appears that a promise recently given by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to Sabih Bey to warn the press against accepting any statements from Muzahim Bey has been kept, since I have, up to the present, found no recent mention of him in the Turkish press.

7. I have sent a copy of this despatch to the British High Commissioner at Bagdad.

I have, &c.

G. G. KNOX.

[E 2583/112/65]

No. 92.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Ferid Bey.

Your Excellency,

Foreign Office, May 23, 1928.

IN your note of the 27th April you reverted to the question of the alleged presence in the neighbourhood of the Turco-Iraq frontier of armed bands of Nestorian refugees and to the reported incursions of certain members of these bands into Turkish territory.

2. I have the honour to inform your Excellency in reply that, as regards the alleged incursion on the 9th August, 1927, in the neighbourhood of the newly delimited frontier at Arush, I am unable to add anything to the statement contained in my note of the 17th January last. As you will recollect, I explained on that occasion that enquiries into the alleged incident were made at the time as a result of your original representations, but that the evidence obtained indicated that no such incursion as that reported to the Turkish Government had in fact taken place.

3. I avail myself of this opportunity to repeat to you the suggestion which has already been made to the Turkish Government on more than one occasion by His Majesty's Government, that it is desirable that questions regarding frontier raids and similar incidents should be dealt with not through the diplomatic channel, but by the frontier authorities, or, should the case be sufficiently serious to require it, by the Permanent Frontier Commission, in accordance with the procedure laid down in chapter II of the Treaty of Angora of the 5th June, 1926.

4. As regards the general question of the settlement of Assyrian refugees in the neighbourhood of the frontier, I have the honour to refer you to paragraphs 3 and 4 of my note of the 5th March dealing with this question of the contents of which the Turkish Government were perhaps not aware when they issued the instructions on which your note of the 27th April was based.

I have, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[E 3269/3269/65]

No. 93.

Sir G. Clerk to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 26.)

(Telegraphic.)

Constantinople, June 26, 1928.

LAST week Minister for Foreign Affairs sent for Iraq Chargé d'Affaires to come up to the capital at once.

The Chargé d'Affaires has just returned and tells me that Minister for Foreign Affairs offered Iraq a pact of friendship in one article, provided that Turkey gets most-favoured-nation treatment, i.e., that Turks in Iraq have benefits of Anglo-Iraq judicial agreement of 25th March, 1924.

Iraq Chargé d'Affaires considers his Government cannot make this concession.

Minister for Foreign Affairs was eloquent on the advantages to Iraq of joining a Turco-Persian-Afghan *entente*; and went on to say that such a *bloc* was also to the interest of Great Britain. "We are building a solid wall for the English," he said, but lamented that we did not seem to see the hand that Turkey was holding out.

Proposed *bloc* may be a protective wall, but should Iraq nationalism develop, it might work the other way, the more so as there are indications that Turkish Government is hoping ultimately to include Syria in the *entente*.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 8.)

CHAPTER IV.—GENERAL.

[E 651/651/65]

No. 94.

Sir M. Robertson to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Buenos Aires, February 8, 1928.

MR. ETTINGER, of the Zionist organisation, who is here, now informs me that the main object of his visit is to collect money for Palestine from local Jews. He wishes me to present him to the President of the Republic and other Argentine authorities; also to attend big meeting to collect funds.

I should be grateful for your instructions. May I present him, and may I express public sympathy with his campaign as he has requested me to do? He has given local interviews to the press appreciative of British action in Palestine.

[E 651/651/65]

No. 95.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir M. Robertson (Buenos Aires).

(No. 8.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, February 10, 1928.

YOUR telegram No. 7 of 8th February: Visit to the Argentine of Mr. Ettinger of the Zionist organisation.

Please see correspondence with Colonial Office in February last, copy of which was sent to you for information on 4th March. In view of my decision recorded therein, you should not attend meeting, make a speech, or present Mr. Ettinger to the President and other Argentine authorities.

[E 1467/249/89]

No. 96.

Mr. Knox to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 20.)

(No. 150.)

Sir,

Angora, March 7, 1928.

IN the course of conversation last night, the Minister for Foreign Affairs was good enough to give me at some length his views on the subject of disarmament and security. The former he felt to be a desirable end, if sought with moderation in a spirit of reality. The latter was for Turkey indispensable, but it was not in his view to be obtained through regional agreements, for which he had a grave distrust. He viewed with some anxiety the present grouping in South-Eastern Europe, where the younger States that had made good and come to some maturity were gravitating towards France and the malcontents towards Italy. These developments confirmed him in his admiration of British foreign policy, which accepted the inevitable commitments of Locarno, but refused to tie itself elsewhere. Turkey, at the opposite pole of Europe, was making for herself an insular situation comparable, on her minor stage, to that of England, and calling for a similar policy, except that for her, in the present state of Europe, a "Balkan Locarno" would be out of the question.

2. Tefik Rushdi Bey, in his conversation with me, made no allusion to his major preoccupation of the moment, the Syrian frontier. He had, however, earlier in the evening discussed the question fully with the Iraq Chargé d'Affaires. He told Sabih Bey that the Turkish Government have decided to accept no delimitation of that frontier until they are in a position to negotiate a tripartite treaty on the lines of the Mosul Agreement with a quasi-independent Syria and France, and then only on the express condition that what he alternately described as a "régime spécial" and an "Etat tampon" be created at Alexandretta. Were these conditions fulfilled, Turkey would be prepared to accept for good and all the frontier as at present delineated. His remarks were interlarded with such comments as that Turkey would rather have as neighbour an Iraq under British mandate than a fully independent State, and that Iraq should not hesitate to rely on British guidance.

3. It is perhaps ungracious to feel that such laudable sentiments do not suffice to cover a somewhat disingenuous appeal to Arab sentiment. In any event the shaft

has gone home, since Sabih Bey has enquired of me in all seriousness whether it would not be possible for His Majesty's Government, in the interests of an enduring settlement on Turkey's southern frontier, to advise the French Government to institute a more liberal régime in Syria. I replied that I feared that France would resent—and with reason—any attempt on our part to instruct her in the proper conception of the duties of a mandatory Power. I thought it well to add that Sabih Bey, as a former member of the Turkish General Staff, could appreciate better than I the extent to which Turkish policy on her frontiers is dictated by that body. In spite of my limited experience, I could only advise him to regard with extreme caution any proposals that might tend to place the Bagdad Railway unrestrictedly in Turkish hands.

4. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner at Bagdad.

I have, &c.

G. E. KNOX.

[E 1785/43/44]

No. 97.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 422.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 3, 1928.

THE Italian Ambassador called to-day to give me information of "yet another" treaty of friendship and conciliation into which Italy was likely to enter. Signor Mussolini had instructed him to inform me that negotiations had been going on for some time between Greece and Turkey for such a treaty to which Italy would be a party. It was most important that nothing should be said publicly on the subject at the present time, but he desired me to be informed as a mark of the confidence which the Italian Government felt in the Government of His Majesty.

I told the Ambassador that I had already heard of the negotiations between Greece and Turkey from another source and that some attempt had been made to ascertain my opinion. I had replied that I did not wish to offer any advice, but that His Majesty's Government would welcome any agreement which put the relations of Turkey and Greece on a more satisfactory footing and rendered peace between them secure, provided only that the terms of the agreement and the conditions in which it was negotiated were not such as to give offence to another Power. In speaking in this sense I had had Italy more particularly in mind as I had not known what part, if any, Italy was playing in the negotiations.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[E 2278/112/65]

No. 98.

*Ferid Bey to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 1.)**Ambassade de la République turque, Londres,
le 27 avril 1928.*

M. le Ministre,

AINSI que votre Excellence peut s'en rappeler, j'avais eu à différentes reprises l'occasion de lui signaler les rassemblements à la frontière turco-irakienne de bandes armées de Nestoriens, dont les agressions en deçà de la frontière et les offensives contre les patrouilles turques ne manquaient pas de créer une atmosphère de troubles continus dans cette région.

C'est ainsi que, dans ma communication datée du 19 septembre 1927, je portais à la connaissance de votre Excellence qu'à teneur des informations fournies par mon Gouvernement, une centaine de Nestoriens armés, parmi lesquels figuraient des personnes portant l'uniforme anglais, avaient franchi la frontière le 9 août 1927 et attaqué les patrouilles turques, et je priais votre Excellence de vouloir bien ordonner une enquête au sujet de l'agression signalée.

Le 17 janvier dernier, dans une lettre qu'il adressait à Chevky Pacha, alors Chargé d'Affaires de Turquie à Londres, Mr. Oliphant annonçait qu'à l'issue de l'enquête ouverte par le Haut-Commissaire adjoint de l'Irak, sur la base des incidents relatés dans ma note du 19 septembre 1927, ce haut fonctionnaire avait constaté que les

autorités locales n'avaient aucune connaissance des actes de banditisme signalés, mais que, si le Gouvernement turc remettait au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la liste des personnes ayant pénétré en territoire turc en possession d'armes, une action légale serait prise contre les coupables dès leur retour en Irak.

Mon Gouvernement, auquel la teneur de cette lettre avait été soumise en temps utile, vient de m'informer que les offensives opérées le 9 août 1927, aux environs d'Aroche, par une bande de cent Nestoriens armés, lesquels, ayant pénétré en territoire turc, firent feu sur nos patrouilles, qui les forcèrent à se replier, sont un fait sur lequel on ne saurait conserver le moindre doute. Le caractère plus ou moins clandestin des préparatifs de ces actes de banditisme a peut-être pu les faire échapper à la vigilance des autorités irakiennes, sans pour cela altérer l'existence effective des agressions opérées. Votre Excellence conviendra également que la détermination de l'identité des agresseurs repoussés—tâche matériellement impossible—ne saurait, par ailleurs, être érigée juridiquement en une condition suspensive de la réalité des faits en cause. En conséquence, les seules données sur lesquelles il soit possible de se baser pour effectuer une enquête utile consistent dans la date et le lieu de l'agression.

Mon Gouvernement, édifié par l'expérience du passé de ces éléments de trouble, qui n'ont laissé échapper aucune occasion pour manifester par des actes leurs sentiments d'hostilité envers la Turquie, croit devoir souligner combien leur séjour dans la zone frontière turco-irakienne peut être préjudiciable à l'harmonie et à la bonne entente que le traité signé à Angora le 5 juin 1926 visait à établir entre les deux États voisins.

C'est dans cet esprit et avec le souci de faire régner la quiétude la plus absolue dans la zone frontière que mon Gouvernement me prie de suggérer au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté de vouloir bien réitérer ses démarches les plus fermes auprès des autorités de Bagdad, aux fins d'installer le plus loin possible de la zone frontière ces bandes de Nestoriens nomades et armés, dont le nombre approximatif ne dépasserait pas 2,000.

Veuillez, &c.
A. FÉRID.

[E 2293/135/65]

No. 99.

Memorandum for Communication to Mr. Amery.

THE Iraq representative presented his credentials to me this morning.

He indicated as matters for discussion the payment by Iraq of the excess costs of British troops in that country, the port arrangements and the relations of Iraq with Persia, to which I added, as a matter of common interest, our relations with Ibn Saud.

As regards the last-named, I said that I hoped good results from Sir Gilbert Clayton's Mission. Sir Gilbert was an officer of great experience, fully trusted by His Majesty's Government and in whom Ibn Saud had confidence. As regards Persia, we were finding considerable difficulty in reconciling the wishes of Persia with the necessities of Iraq. On the other two points, I would beg him to continue his discussions with Mr. Amery, who was much better informed in all the details of Anglo-Iraq relations than I could pretend to be.

A. C.

Foreign Office, May 1, 1928.